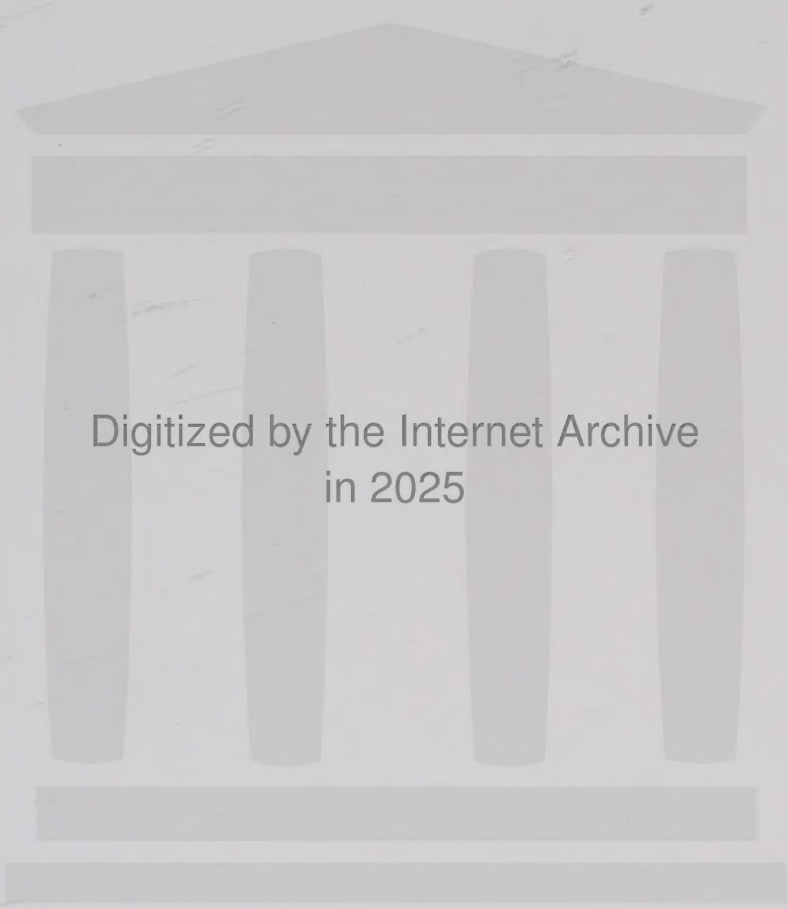
Selection From the Sermons Preached During the Latter Years of His Life in the Parish Church of Barnes and in the Cathedral of St. Paul's by Henry Melvill

HENRY MELVILL


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/isbn_9781357452650

Selection From the Sermons Preached During the Latter Years of His Life in the Parish Church of Barnes and in the Cathedral of St. Paul's by Henry Melvill

You are holding a reproduction of an original work that is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other countries.You may freely copy and distribute this work as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work.This book may contain prior copyright references, and library stamps (as most of these works were scanned from library copies).These have been scanned and retained as part of the historical artifact.

This book may have occasional imperfections such as missing or blurred pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were either part of the original artifact, or were introduced by the scanning process. We believe this work is culturally important, and despite the imperfections, have elected to bring it back into print as part of our continuing commitment to the preservation of printed works worldwide. We appreciate your understanding of the imperfections in the preservation process, and hope you enjoy this valuable book.

SERMONS PREACHED DURING THE LATTER YEARS OF HIS LIFE

VOL. I

RIVINGTONS

London . . . . . *Waterloo Place*
Oxford . . . . . *High Street*
Cambridge . . . . . *Trinity Street*

SELECTION

FROM THE

SERMONS

Preached during the latter Years of his Life

IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF BARNES, AND IN THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. PAUL'S

BY

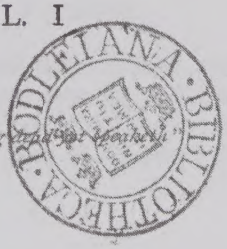
HENRY MELVILL, B.D.

LATE CANON OF ST. PAUL'S, AND CHAPLAIN IN ORDINARY TO THE QUEEN

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

"By faith, he being dead yet speaketh."



RIVINGTONS

London, Oxford, and Cambridge

1872

100. w. 203.

CONTENTS

SERMON I

THE PARITY OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION AND CHRIST'S DEATH

PAGE

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—ROMANS v. 19 1

SERMON II

THE SONG OF SIMEON

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."—ST. LUKE ii. 29—32 20

SERMON III

THE DAYS OF OLD

"I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times."—PSALM lxxvii. 5 35

SERMON IV

OMISSIONS OF SCRIPTURE

PAGE

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."—St. John xxi. 25 53

SERMON V

THE MADMAN IN SPORT

"As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?"—Proverbs xxvi. 18, 19 68

SERMON VI

PEACE, PEACE, WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE

"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."—Jer. vi. 14 83

SERMON VII

A VERY LOVELY SONG

"And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not."—Ezekiel xxxiii. 32 97

SERMON VIII

THIS IS THAT KING AHAZ

"And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz."—2 Chron. xxviii. 22 . 112

SERMON IX

ARIEL

PAGE

"Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt."—ISAIAH xxix. part of verse 1 125

SERMON X

NEW WINE AND OLD BOTTLES

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."—MATT. ix. 16, 17 . . 141

SERMON XI

DEMAS

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."—2 TIMOTHY iv. part of verse 10 156

SERMON XII

MICHAEL AND THE DEVIL

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."—JUDE 8, 9 . 170

SERMON XIII

THE FOLLY OF EXCESSIVE LABOUR

PAGE

"If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct." —ECCLES. x. 10 185

SERMON XIV

ST. PAUL AT PHILIPPI

"And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."—ACTS xvi. 23, 24 198

SERMON XV

BELIEVING A LIE

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."—2 THESS. ii. 11 212

SERMON XVI

THE PRODIGAL SON

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."—LUKE xv. 31, 32 . 226

SERMON XVII

THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING

PAGE

"For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."—1 Cor. i. 21 . . . 242

SERMON XVIII

KNOWLEDGE AND SORROW

"For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."—Eccles. i. 18 . . . 258

SERMON XIX

THE UNJUST STEWARD

"And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods."—St. Luke xvi. 1 . . 273

SERMON XX

THE MAN BORN BLIND

"And, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."—St. John ix. 1-3 287

MEMOIR.

THE following brief Memoir of the late Canon Melvill was written immediately after his decease on the 9th February, 1871, and is published here with the hope that such a record, imperfect though it may be, of the life and labours of this eminent Minister of the Church, may be interesting to the many friends and admirers he has left behind him, and form a not inappropriate introduction to these volumes containing his latest utterances from the pulpit.

On the 15th February, 1871, were consigned to their final resting-place in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral the remains of the Rev. Henry Melvill—a name that will be long remembered in the Church of England. Many, as they read the announcement of his decease, will have thought of him as the friend and companion of private life; the warm sympathiser, in joy and in sorrow, with rich and with poor; the kindly adviser in difficulty, the ever-ready helper in distress; and many more will have thought of him in his higher capacity as a minister of the Church—will have recalled to memory the lofty

tones in which, during long years, he proclaimed his Master's message, and with fervent persuasion led erring souls to the Cross of Christ.

The prominent points in the life of the late Canon Melvill may be briefly told. He was the son of Captain Philip Melvill, formerly of H.M.'s 73rd Regiment, and Lieut.-Governor of Pendennis Castle, in Cornwall, and he was a younger brother of the late Sir James Cosmo Melvill, K.C.B. He was born in the year 1798, and consequently was in his 73rd year at the time of his death. He was carefully educated by a private tutor, an accomplished scholar, long since deceased, and entered St. John's College, at Cambridge, in October, 1817. In January, 1821, he took his Bachelor's Degree, and was 2nd Wrangler and 1st Smith's Prizeman of his year. Subsequently he became a Fellow and Tutor of Peterhouse, and so continued for about ten years, when he married, and vacated his Fellowship.

His college career thus closed, with academical distinction of a very high order, Mr. Melvill undertook the incumbency of Camden Chapel, on the invitation of the trustees, of whom the late Mr. Henry Kemble (then a stranger to him, though subsequently he became his brother-in-law) was the principal. At the University, Mr. Melvill's powers as a Preacher had been recognised and warmly admired; at Camden Chapel they became

more fully developed and more widely known. His voice and manner were alike remarkable and original; the depth of his thoughts, the searching force of his arguments, the felicity of his language, the exuberance of his imagery and illustration,—these were universally acknowledged; and listening crowds confessed, by rapt attention and the breathless interest with which they hung upon his words, the power of his impassioned eloquence, as he delivered, with uncompromising faithfulness, the precepts and doctrines of the Christian faith.

That this is no exaggerated description of Mr. Melvill's preaching for many years, there are multitudes to bear witness who remember him in the height of his matured powers; and even in later times, down almost to the close of life, though of necessity there was failure in the physical energies, there was little of decay to be marked in the intellectual.

In the year 1840 the Duke of Wellington conferred upon Mr. Melvill the Chaplaincy of the Tower; and it is worthy of remark that the introduction to the Duke was not the consequence of any friendly or family intervention, but the effect of a speech on a public occasion, where his Grace happened to be presiding, which drew forth an immediate expression of lively admiration from the great soldier-statesman of the time; and it may further be incidentally mentioned that, so long as the Duke lived,

Mr. Melvill was annually called upon to preach before him the anniversary sermon at the Trinity House.

The ministrations of Mr. Melvill at Camden Chapel were continued for fifteen years; interrupted only by such intervals of rest as were found absolutely necessary to recruit his strength. On such occasions it was his constant practice to travel abroad; thus he visited, in succession, most of the capital cities of Europe, and the countries even beyond Europe distinguished for natural beauties, or for classical or Biblical associations. In this manner he stored his mind with varied knowledge, which enabled him to draw upon his memory for many a happy illustration and many a striking description, but all brought to bear on the one great work of his life, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ. But under the severe strain upon his powers, physical as well as mental, his health at last gave way so far as to induce him to accept the offer made to him by the Directors of the East India Company to take the office of Principal in their College at Haileybury. This office he filled, honoured and respected by all who passed under his influence, until, in the change of the constitution of the Indian administration, the establishment was broken up. The sphere and character of Mr. Melvill's duties were thus changed; but his labours as a preacher were not intermitted. In 1849 he had been elected to the Lectureship at St. Margaret's,

Lothbury; and there, such was the attraction of his preaching, that week after week, on every Tuesday morning, numbers of the business-men of London—men from the Mart and the Exchange—snatching a brief interval from their various occupations, might be seen crowding within the walls of that old City church to hear his stirring and heart-searching discourses.

In 1853 Mr. Melvill was named one of the Queen's Chaplains in Ordinary; and on the occasion of the Public Fast, during the Crimean War, he was appointed to preach before the House of Commons at St. Margaret's, Westminster. For his sermon on that occasion he received the thanks of the House, voted with many warm encomiums by the leading statesmen of the day; and soon afterwards he was nominated by Lord Palmerston to a Canon Residentiary in the Cathedral of St. Paul's. A few years after this he undertook the Rectory of Barnes, one of the livings in the gift of the Dean and Chapter; and the latter years of his life were passed in the performance of the duties appertaining to his office in the Cathedral and in the parish. In the autumn of 1869 he was prostrated by a very severe attack of illness, from the effects of which he never afterwards entirely recovered; and in the September of 1870 he felt it right, from the fast-failing state of his health, to resign his Rectory. He then for a while sought rest in retirement; after which he

returned to his place in the Cathedral, and endeavoured to take his accustomed part in its services. At Barnes he preached his last sermon, and at the Cathedral he officiated for the last time as a minister of the Church. But the effort to continue his labours was vain; nature was too much exhausted; and after a short period of suffering, borne with a patience and resignation which indicated the firm faith, the true hope in Christ burning brightly within him, and which caused those around him to think the thought expressed in those beautiful lines—

> "He taught us how to live, and now, too high
> A price for knowledge, shows us how to die"—

he calmly expired very early in the morning of the 9th February, 1871. Thus, to the eye of sense, fell that day "a prince and a great man in Israel;" and thus, to the eye of faith, died this eminent minister of the Gospel, with the angel message sounding in his ears, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

Mr. Melvill's published works consist mainly of sermons, which in this form are but the reflection of his utterances from the pulpit. In his own figure, he used the Press as an auxiliary to the tongue, allowing it to catch the sounds ere they died away, and to stamp them with permanent being; whereby "words addressed to an

insignificant company become, when printed, addressed to a widely-spread nation." The printed sermons bearing his name fill many volumes; and now that the voice is for ever hushed, these pages, teeming with sound divinity, practical piety, and Christian instruction of every kind, remain as the permanent record of those "winged words," the effect of which those who heard can never forget, and those who never heard can but faintly imagine.

To this rapid and imperfect sketch of his public life, some traits of Henry Melvill's character may not inappropriately be added. With all the talents of his gifted nature consecrated to the service of his holy office, his chief characteristic was humility of mind, that truest mark of real nobility of soul; his ruling principle was devotion to *duty*—duty to God, and duty to man; and never were the two more beautifully blended together than in him. While the pure truths of the Gospel flowed so persuasively from his lips, the pure spirit of Christianity ever reigned in his heart, and the purest charity influenced his every thought and every action. Essentially a Churchman, he never attached himself to any party in the Church. Ever lowly in his own eyes, he sought not the praise of men; he seldom—perhaps too seldom—came forward beyond his allotted sphere; and if others claimed him as marked out for higher preferment in his sacred profession, none ever heard him so speak of himself.

In one of his early sermons, dwelling on the doctrine of the Atonement, there is this passage: "In consequence of this great offering, men become justified in the sight of God, by sincerely renouncing all title to merit of their own, and trusting with a simple, active faith to the merits of their crucified Redeemer—'There is no other name given under Heaven by which men can be saved but that of Christ Jesus alone.' Such, I believe (and I pray God to correct me if I err therein, for it is matter of eternal moment), such I believe to be the sound doctrine of Holy Writ."

And it is very remarkable how this humble saving faith abided in him to the last; for when friends attempted to lead him to think on the many souls he had been the means of converting from error and leading to the Cross, "Oh, no," he exclaimed; "talk not to me of any merit of my own: far from it; I have served my Master only too little, and too feebly. Write only on my tomb, 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'"

Such a man—such a Christian, and such a minister of the Gospel,—was Henry Melvill; and happy will it ever be for the Church of England, when she can number among her sons many like him, so gifted, so devoted, who will love her as truly, and serve her as faithfully and as well.

It remains to add a few words of explanation as to the present publication, and the distinction to be observed between it and former works of the same authorship.

The sermons contained in these volumes have been selected from the large number in manuscript which the late Canon Melvill left at his decease—the fruit, it may be termed, of his life-long labour in the ministry of the Church. Of these manuscripts, it is found on examination that many have from time to time been published by himself; many more have been printed as taken down when delivered from the pulpit, without his knowledge or consent; while many still remain which, so far as has been ascertained at least, have never hitherto been either printed or published.

From the latter a selection has been made, and in the selection a preference has been given to those sermons which were preached during the latter years of Mr. Melvill's ministry at Barnes and at St. Paul's Cathedral. A peculiar interest always attaches itself to the last words or works of those who have been eminent in literature, or science, or art; and so it has been thought that the last sermons of a preacher, so eminently gifted as the late Canon Melvill, may possess a value of their own, not because they are necessarily the best, but because they are the latest, and must ever remain the last.

In preparing for the Press, care has been taken to preserve each sermon exactly as found, ready for preaching, and as presumed to have been actually preached; nothing has been added, and only parts omitted which are evidently redundant, and are marked as such in the manuscript. Thus these sermons convey a precise reflection of the delivery from the pulpit; but the reader will remember that, unlike all other works of Mr. Melvill which have been published during his lifetime by himself, there has been no revision after they were preached and before they were printed; they are presented to the eye as they were spoken to the listening ear. The hand that might have revised is now, alas! cold in the grave; no other can supply its place; and it is idle to inquire, and useless to conjecture, how far or in what direction there might have been change or correction, had that master-hand been able, as heretofore, to perform its office as "the auxiliary to the tongue."

With the earnest hope, then, that they may be extensively useful, and with fervent prayer to the Almighty that the same blessing which was vouchsafed to the living labours of His ministering servant, now taken to Himself, may be continued and abundantly shed upon this, which may fitly be called a voice from the tomb—this voice of one "who being dead yet speaketh"—these volumes are presented to the public.

SERMON I

THE PARITY OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION AND CHRIST'S DEATH

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—ROMANS v. 19.

IT is hardly possible to peruse attentively the chapter in which these words occur, and not to be struck with the largeness of the effects which seem ascribed to the mediation of Christ. You find, for example, Adam described as the figure of Christ; and you cannot vindicate his representation unless you attribute to the obedience of the one as extensive consequences as to the transgression of the other. The chief respect in which Adam prefigured Christ was in the being the head and surety of the race, gathering, as it were, the nature into himself, and acting as the representative of all by whom it should be borne. But you see at once that the parallel will not hold good, unless Christ's suretyship have been coextensive with Adam's; unless, that is, the effects of the Mediator's death, like those of Adam's transgression, include all men within their range. To say that all have share in the consequences of the transgression, but that only a few have share in those of the obedience—this seems inconsistent with the Apostle's representation: this makes the antitype inferior to the type; whereas

ordinarily we expect the reverse, and look to find in the figure less of compass and of depth than in that which it foreshows. If you could disprove the doctrine of universal redemption, and establish that of particular—if, in other words, you could satisfactorily show that Christ died not for the whole world, but only for His elect people: you would make it very difficult to show how Adam was the figure of the Mediator: you would attach so much broader results to the actions of the one than to those of the other, that the representation would be at least partial, and the predicted come far short of the prediction.

But the Apostle is not content with defining Adam as the figure of Christ, and then leaving us to infer the coextensiveness of the results of transgression and obedience. He proceeds to employ the strongest language in proof that Christ recovered for the race whatsoever Adam lost—nay, conferred on us far more than had been forfeited. He expressly says, "Not as the offence, so also is the free gift." He will not allow that the free gift is no larger than the offence, or that redemption only just reinstates us in the position whence we fell. "For if"—he proceeds—"through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." We must not lay stress on the word "many," as though it did not necessarily denote "all." The "many" who died through the offence were "all;" and what then becomes of the "much more" of the Apostle, if fewer than "all" be the "many" unto whom the free gift hath descended? In a subsequent verse which we take as our text, it is said, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Here, again, we

cannot deny, that by the "many" who were made sinners through one man's disobedience, "all" are intended; seeing that there lives not the man who fell not in Adam. What, therefore, can we conclude but that "all" are denoted by the "many" made righteous by one man's obedience? In another verse, indeed, the statement is yet more explicit; for the Apostle uses the word "all," and not the word "many." "As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one the free gift came unto all men unto justification of life." We see not how to evade the truth laid down in these successive passages—namely, that the mediatorial work of Christ has conferred a real benefit on every man, without a single exception—a benefit as actual as the injury done him by Adam; not only as actual, but to the full as large; so that he is placed in at least as advantageous a position as though he had had no share in the consequences of apostasy. The redemption of our race is represented as every way commensurate with the ruin; as though whatsoever was lost had been recovered, whatsoever was injured repaired. And this representation is made in the face of all the sinfulness and misery with which the globe is yet overrun; and the undeniable fact, that numbers are perishing, perishing in every land and in every age, notwithstanding the Mediator's interference.

It can hardly be denied that, to a cursory observer, our globe, and our race, bear but little of the aspect of redemption. The consequences of apostasy appear in as full force as though there had been nothing of that mighty interference which we affirm to have been made by our Surety. Sin, and sorrow, and pain, and death—on these there has been put no visible arrest; and we may think that the globe, on which we dwell, would not

have been more surrendered to the tyranny of evil, had it never been trodden by an Omnipotent deliverer. Add to this, that large masses of the human population live and die in utter ignorance of Christ: and how, we naturally ask, how are they the better for redemption? How can it be shown that these have recovered, through the Mediator, what they lost in their forefathers? These are weighty and difficult questions. Our text assigning, as it does, universality to the benefits which flow from Christ's mediation, is apparently opposed to facts which force themselves on the notice of the most casual observers. The earth wears little or nothing of the aspect of a redeemed earth: the thorn and the thistle bear witness that the original curse is still on its soil; and man must still wring from it a disastrous subsistence, experiencing in its full force the primeval malediction. The grave, moreover, has not been closed: each generation, as though by an irreversible decree, returns to the dust; and no trophies are to be seen of an alleged victory over death. And if, from physical, we pass to moral evil, alas! how few and faint are the evidences that any correction has been applied to the vast disorganization of the human spirit. How comparatively rare are the instances, even in evangelized lands, of a soul that hath recovered the lost image of God; and how are wide districts completely overrun by the most debasing superstitions. Yet, in spite of these opposing appearances, St. Paul draws a comparison between what Christ and what Adam effected, and exhibits the one as far more than commensurate with the other. It is, therefore, evident that appearances are not to be taken as proofs; that we must search below the surface of things, ere we can discover and comprehend the issues of the work of mediation.

Let us give ourselves, then, calmly and diligently, to two investigations, each of which is essential to our ascertaining the meaning of our text, and removing the objections which seem to lie against its statement and that of the context. In the first place, we will examine what the human race lost through the transgression of Adam: in the second place, what they have gained through the mediation of Christ: whilst throughout it will be our object to prove, taking the assertion in the largest possible sense, that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Now it is of great importance, when considering the effects and consequences of Adam's apostasy, that we confine ourselves as much as possible to the statements of Scripture, and free ourselves from the trammels of human theories, however long received and ably supported. The Scriptural statements are indeed very brief, so that great room has been left for conjecture. But the thing to be avoided is the imposing upon men, as ascertained truth, what cannot be proved distinctly from the Bible, and thus claiming for our conjecture the authority of Revelation. Thus it seems generally received as unquestionable truth, that, had Adam not fallen, he would have secured eternal happiness for all his posterity, as well as for himself; that our destiny was given into his keeping, and that nothing was required, but his abstaining from the forbidden fruit, in order to our passing, without death, into everlasting blessedness. But we are far from sure that this common opinion is correct. It is certain that we all derive from Adam a nature depraved through his rebellion; and it would seem equally certain that we should all have derived from him an unpolluted

nature had he resisted temptation. And because we derive a depraved nature, we are born under sentence of condemnation, the children of wrath, and objects of the Almighty's displeasure. If we had derived the unpolluted nature, of course we should not have been born under condemnation, but should have enjoyed the favour, and been privileged with the friendship, of our Maker. But we do not see why, along with the unpolluted nature, every one of us would have received a title to everlasting blessedness, so that we should not only have been pure as Adam in his innocence, but have enjoyed a security which belonged not to his portion. We can find no proof that evil could never have gained entrance into this world, unless it had gained it through the apostasy of Adam; that Satan must have failed in his every assault upon man, if he had not succeeded in his first. We rather incline to the belief—for this alone will establish equality between the ruin and the restoration—that each man would have been put upon protection for himself; and that, possessing in all its beauty the image of God, he would have been subjected to a gentle trial of obedience, and have obtained, or lost, Heaven, according as he had preserved or let go his fidelity. And if this be the correct account of what man would have been, had not Adam transgressed, we shall find it easy to draw that parallel between apostasy and redemption which, in the chapter before us, St. Paul seems to have designed to set forth and establish. The statement of our text, in regard to the results of apostasy, is, that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners"—"many," as we have shown you, being here put for "all." And what are we to gather from this, as to the change which passed on the condition of our race, through the transgression

of its earliest head? It is beyond all question that Adam acted as the representative of his seed; and that every one of us had a personal and incalculable interest in what was done by the first man during his period of probation. It was no hard trial which was imposed on our representative; but one which, possessed as he was of an undepraved nature, and placed where everything conspired to strengthen him for obedience, might have been met without shrinking, and passed through without failure. And had it been thus met and undergone, we are assured that Adam would thereby have secured to his children the very advantages with which he had himself been created, and have transmitted to the furthest of his line that image of Deity which his own soul personated.

We know not, indeed, with any precision, how far his children, thus like him in endowment, would have been like him in disobedience; nor whether the immortality, which would have been easily attainable by all, would have been grasped by the many, or by the few. We can only be sure that every one would have had the fullest power, and the amplest opportunity, of securing for himself the enduring blessedness of Heaven; and that nothing but his own wilfulness, his own perverse preference of evil to good, would have been able to obstruct his passage through the gentlest trial into the richest glory. But, with the fall of Adam, was the loss of the image wherein he had been made. He could not therefore send down to his children the powers he had received at his creation. He could only transmit feebleness and waywardness, a propensity to evil, and an inability of offering unto God any acceptable service. And thus he made inevitable the eternal condemnation of every being that should be born of his line. It became impossible that there should

arise the solitary man, descended naturally from him who eat the forbidden fruit, who should be able to perform the conditions which Heaven has offered, or make atonement for the guiltiness contracted from his very parentage. It mattered nothing that there had been but one offence: that one offence vitiated fatally the nature in which it had been committed; and henceforwards that nature was therefore incapacitated—unless, indeed, means were devised for its renewal—for any such obedience as might avert death, and open the gate of everlasting life. And this it is which we find affirmed by the Apostle in the words of our text. Giving no information as to what men would have been, had their first father obeyed, he pronounces men utterly ruined, "made sinners," as the consequence of disobedience. For surveying them all as represented by Adam, as acting through him as their surety, and therefore participating in his sin, and binding on themselves all its fearful entailments, he does not hesitate to announce as an unquestionable truth—and, oh! it is a truth, of which every one amongst us is the living and melancholy witness, a witness by his mortality, a witness by his love of sin, a witness by his incapacity of keeping God's commandments—that "by the disobedience of one were many made sinners."

Now, if you will take this as the true account of what we lost through the disobedience of Adam, you will easily determine that we have gained, at the least, an equivalent through the suretyship of Christ. We wish you most carefully to observe, that, unless we prove this equivalent, unless, in other words, we show you that all men are as much benefited by the Mediator as injured by their forefather, it is not possible to explain satis-

factorily the reasoning of St. Paul in our text and its context. We know, indeed, that it is common to regard Adam as the representative of all men, but Christ as the representative of none but His elect family; and then to suppose the Apostle to affirm that, as every one, of whom Adam was naturally the head, derives from him death, so does every one of whom Christ is spiritually the head, derive from Him life. But this appears to us to be not so much explaining, as evading the passage. We showed you, at the outset, that St. Paul makes no difference in regard of number between those whom Adam, and those whom Christ represented; for though he uses the word "many," he so uses it as to make it evident that "all" are, in both cases, meant. And if we receive the account which has just been given of what all men lost in Adam, we shall not need to explain away, before we can interpret the statement of the Apostle. We argue that what all men lost was the power and opportunity of securing a blessed immortality. This was the amount of the injury which had been wrought. Every man, had our first parent been faithful, would have had Heaven within reach, attainable by his own obedience; but no man, when our nature had been depraved, could avert from himself death, and obtain eternal life. But if, by suffering and obeying in our stead, Christ has again made it possible that all may be saved; if He have placed every man in such a position, and procured for every man such assistance that every man may enter Heaven, who does not wilfully exclude himself, it must surely follow that the results of Christ's mediation are, at least, as large as those of Adam's rebellion; and we have material from which to vindicate the statements of our text.

And is it not true—is it not demonstrable from the

pages of Scripture—that a capability of being saved has been bestowed by Christ on every individual of our race? Ay, and that—for St. Paul is not content with maintaining that Christ has done as much for men in the way of benefit, as Adam in that of injury—a redeemed being, such as any one of ourselves, has far greater facilities for obtaining immortality, than an unfallen being, such as our first parents, whilst still in the image of God? We are ready to undertake the defence of these positions; and we glory in the persuasion that Redemption may be thus proved to have more than counteracted apostasy. We lay down as our great groundwork a truth which, however doubted by some, is nothing less than the foundation of the whole Christian system; the truth that the Lamb of God laid down His life for the whole human race, and not merely for an elect portion of this race; that He ransomed, by His precious blood, Judas who betrayed him, and Pilate who condemned, as well as John whom He loved, and Peter whom He brought to contrition for his fault; and that there lives not the being on the broad surface of this earth—the Laplander amongst his snows, the Indian in his woods, the Arab in the desert, as well as the more favoured inhabitant of districts on which falls the rich light of Christianity—who was not redeemed by that vast act of expiation which Jesus wrought out in anguish upon Calvary. The plain and glorious statements of Scripture are not to be evaded. Over and over again, is it expressly declared that Christ died for the world; that He gave His life as a ransom for all, and that He was a propitiation for the sins of every human being. We must not have these statements cut down and obscured, that they may be made to square with some preconceived theory, and offer no resistance to some favourite hypo-

thesis. I may reach Heaven without knowing myself elect: I cannot take a single step without knowing myself redeemed. So that the Redemption of all is the very bone of the whole Christian system: the Gospel addresses itself unreservedly to the world; it offers pardon to the world. If the world be redeemed, there is honesty in the offer; if only a part of the world be redeemed, the offer, as made to the unredeemed rest, is little more than a mockery, and could never proceed from a God who is emphatically truth.

It is, then, on this blessed doctrine—the doctrine of universal Redemption—that we place ourselves when endeavouring to vindicate such statements as those in the chapter before us. Take the case of any one in this assembly. He is a redeemed man: he is a man for whom Christ died; for whom Christ shed His precious blood. He is a man for whom the Mediator made atonement, and on whose behalf He obtained the gifts of the Spirit. And, as a redeemed man, he may be a saved man—ay, blessed and beautiful truth! there is not one of you unto whom the door of Heaven is not standing open, and who may not, if he will, pass into the Kingdom as his own unalienable heritage. And shall it be said of this man, that he lost more in Adam than he recovered in Christ? What! is Heaven less easy of attainment than it would have been had he never fallen in his forefather? Would I be what Adam was, rather than what I am, when the thing to be considered is the nearness in which I stand to everlasting life? In other and simpler words, do I feel that it would have been easier for me to have been saved, had I been placed in Paradise, dependent on my own powers of obedience, than it is now that I stand in a polluted creation, with God's own Son as my Surety and Advocate? What right have

I to think that, if I had Adam's advantages, I should have greater stedfastness and better success?—that, with no larger powers of resistance, I should triumph where he fell, and conquer where he was vanquished? And, without comparing myself with Adam, or arguing from his disastrous defeat, I must, at least, admit that the conditions of the Gospel are more advantageous than those of any covenant of works; and that the terms on which I may obtain Heaven through the merits of Christ, are far easier, and far less expose me to the likelihood of failure, than the very mildest which could have been proposed to an innocent creature in a state of protection.

Oh! I know that imagination delights to rest on the loveliness and purity of the garden of the Lord, and to figure to itself the might and the glory of the man, unto whom the splendid domain was given for a dwelling. I know that, when thought is turned on the young Creation, the uppermost feeling is frequently one of deep and bitter regret—regret that man is no longer what he was, and that God did not, by some great exertion of power, keep him fast to his allegiance. Shall I be bold at once, and declare that I share not this regret? I am not to prefer Paradise to a desecrated earth, with its harvest of the thorn and the thistle, merely because it was a scene of surpassing enchantment, with richer foliage, and a balmier air, and more crystal waters than have since been known, or even perhaps imagined. In Paradise, I must have been a wrestler for immortality, just as on this sin-stricken globe I must be a wrestler for immortality. And I prefer the scene where I may wrestle with the greatest probability of success. Take away all the beauty, wither the luxuriance, give me the desert for the garden, the hurricane for the calm, and I can but thank you and bless

you, if I feel that, all the while, you place me where I have increased means for securing happiness through Eternity. And this is what I feel in reference to my present condition, when contrasted with that of the unfallen Adam. As a believer in Christ, I am unspeakably more sure of Heaven, than had I been created in uprightness, and then left to determine, by my own strivings, my everlasting portion. I am now begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and nothing can separate me from God's love: but then my immortality would have hung by a thread, and from moment to moment there would have been peril of its loss. I have now a Champion on my side, through whose aid I am certain to overcome every enemy: I should then have had to trust in myself; and where is my evidence that I should not have been quickly subdued? Oh! if it be true that I lost in Adam the image of God, that I lost that holiness of nature which might have enabled me to obey the Divine commands, and fitted me to enjoy the Divine presence; that I lost a glorious habitation, whose every scene would have ministered motive to stedfastness—is it not equally true that, through Christ, I receive that Spirit which will renew in me the effaced likeness, recover meetness for communion with God and with angels, and become heir to a Kingdom whose splendours the eye hath not seen, and whose happiness the ear hath not heard?

And what is true of myself, is true of every one of you. What I lost in Adam, every one of you lost: what I may obtain through Christ, every one of you may obtain. And if, then, we take this present assembly as representing the whole human race, supposing that what may be experienced of ourselves may be equally experienced, without exception, of all who have sprung of the same line, what

is to prevent our pronouncing the statement of our text as literally fulfilled by the effects of Christ's suretyship, as by those of Adam's apostasy? We were dead: the sentence had gone forth against us; and nothing was to be looked for, but that generation after generation would have withered hopelessly away, blasted by the breath of our Maker's displeasure! "By one man's disobedience, many" [all] "were made sinners." But there arose a Deliverer, who, by redeeming human nature, redeemed all who were ever to be born of that nature. Dying, "the just for the unjust," He opened the graves of the ruined population, and placed the forfeited immortality once more within reach. He asked nothing from those whose cause He thus nobly overtook: they had nothing to offer; and therefore He bestowed, as a free gift, what he had purchased by unmeasured humiliation and incalculable suffering. And if, as we have shown, this free gift consist of pardon, of righteousness, of all that transgressors can need in order to their being restored to God's favour, and admitted into Heaven, why we may declare of this gift, wheresoever imparted, that it is a communication of the results of the obedience of Christ: and why, men and brethren, if we view the whole race as condemned for the sin of their forefather, and losing all power of securing immortality; and then as ransomed by a Mediator, recovering more than they had lost, and placed on a far better footing, as candidates for eternity, than they originally stood—why may we not unreservedly affirm, taking the word "many" in its largest possible sense, that, "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous?"

There is one objection which may be taken to these

statements. It may be said that even if those favoured with Revelation and the privileges of the Gospel are as advantageously placed as though Adam had not fallen, the same cannot be affirmed of the heathen—of that great body of men unto whom have not been sent the tidings of redemption. It cannot, you will contend, be maintained that the heathen have recovered, through a Mediator, so much as they had lost through their forefather. What, then, becomes of the alleged equality between the consequences of Christ's suretyship and those of Adam's transgression? No doubt, the case of the heathen is one of great difficulty. We do not know how God will deal with the heathen; we know only that the Judge of the earth will do right, and that, where but little has been given, but little will be required. Perhaps, however, we increase the difficulty by our own suppositions. We take for granted that it is utterly impossible that any heathen should be saved—are we right in this? Undoubtedly, no man can be saved without Christ; but may not a man be saved without a distinct knowledge of Christ? Under the earlier dispensation, when only the faintest notices had been vouchsafed of redemption, all who were saved must have been saved without a distinct knowledge of Christ. They could have had nothing beyond a general persuasion that God would make arrangements for the pardon of sin: the exact nature of those arrangements must have been as much hidden from them as from their now heathen descendants. The heathen are under the same dispensation as were the Patriarchs, whose posterity they are. They may have corrupted the original revelation; they may have forgotten the original revelation; but, nevertheless, they had that revelation; and, as it would be unwarrantable to pronounce that a man could not have

been saved before the Flood because he could have had nothing but the general belief that God would provide an atonement, there may be no warrant for denying that a heathen may be saved because he has no theology but that of tradition and conscience—tradition which teaches him the necessity of a sacrifice for sin; conscience which warns him that sin is displeasing to the great Spirit of the universe, and must be abandoned if he hope to escape vengeance.

You point to Pagan tribes, immersed in ignorance and degraded by superstition, and you ask, in a tone of triumph, whether redemption can have conferred benefits upon these at all commensurate with the injuries entailed by apostasy. This is your way of proving that it was apparently inconsistent with the mercy of God that He permitted, when He might have prevented, the fall of the first man. You allow that Christians have greater privileges than they would have had if Adam had not sinned: but the great bulk of humankind know nothing of Christianity; and you quote their remediless misery in evidence that the results of apostasy exceed those of redemption. But are you sure upon two points? Are you sure that these Pagans would have been saved had not Adam transgressed? Are you sure that none of them can be saved because they have not heard the full Gospel? These heathen might have been each placed, as was Adam, in a state of probation, each left to gain Heaven by his own obedience, and each might have failed in the trial, and thus brought himself under condemnation. And having thus fallen, each would have been without hope of mercy —his salvation would have been impossible: whereas now, as a redeemed man, it is at the least possible that he may be saved, and that the condition of each may be immeasurably better than it would have been, had God not

allowed our forefather's fall. We can lament as much as any man the degradation, moral and physical, of the idolater; and as we behold the slave of superstition crouching before the work of his own hands, we cannot restrain the apprehension that in vain has he been furnished with the theology of tradition and the theology of conscience, and we long accordingly that, ere he sink into the grave, he should be plied with the theology of the Gospel. But nevertheless—and this it is which makes us send him the Missionary—we behold in him, all the while, a man for whom Jesus died; one, therefore, against whose salvation there lies no impossibility; one, moreover, who is in an incalculably more advantageous position than he might have been if born in innocence; for then he might have fallen, and his state would have been hopeless; and therefore, notwithstanding all his wretchedness and all his crime, he is no proof to us that Christ hath not won back for the whole human race whatever they lost through the apostasy of Adam—no proof that we must put limitations on the argument carried on by St. Paul in this fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans—that we must interpret in a narrow and restricted sense such sayings as these: "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life;" "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

Thus, then, have we endeavoured to explain and set clearly before you Scripture statements which represent the work of mediation, the work, that is, which Christ Jesus undertook and wrought out on our behalf as every way as extensive in its effects and consequences

as the sin of our first parents. Nay, the statements go beyond this, and we have carried our expectations beyond. That the world is the better for the sin of Adam — that the whole human race is in a better, a more advantageous position in the struggle for immortality than it would have been had our first parents not transgressed—this is what seems laid down in the chapter before us; and this it has been the object of our present discourse to establish. The subject is one of no ordinary difficulty. We have not knowingly evaded any point, but have laboured to define accurately what was lost in Adam and what gained in Christ, and to show how vastly the preponderance is on the side of the latter. There may be mysteries round the matter of the entrance of evil. We do not pretend to deny this; neither do we pretend to clear away the mysteries. We believe that men are much better employed in endeavouring to remove evil out of the world than in endeavouring to explain how it came in. But, whilst frankly acknowledging the darkness which is, and must be, round the matter, we seem even already able to prove that it has been greatly for the advantage of His creation that God permitted the tempter to overcome Adam. We can already discern provision for the production of a far greater sum-total of happiness than could ever have resulted from an arrangement which kept our first parents firm in their allegiance. We ask, then, for no tears over the faded glories of humanity. We will gather no train of mourners to pour forth the loud lament, as our brethren and our sisters are laid in the dust. We appeal from apostasy to redemption; from a soiled and polluted globe to new heavens and a new earth; from mouldering bodies to the trumpets of a general Easter, when the voice of the Son of Man shall bid the

dead live; and all that I can desire for you and for myself, it is that we may not cling to pollution and be enamoured of ruin when the means of sanctification and deliverance lie within reach.

Sons of the first Adam, and therefore heirs of wretchedness and shame, have we joined ourselves by faith to the saved, and thus become sons of God by adoption? Think of words which St. Paul uses in the chapter before us—"the free gift." The condition of our salvation is that we be willing to take it. I cannot buy it. The gold and the diamond—I might sweep them from all quarters of creation; but they could make up no purchase-money. The penance and the toil—I might cast myself on the rack, and live only to labour; but I could not exhaust the ponderous curse which transgression has provoked. "But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Oh, the music which there should be to us in that one word, "gift!" If you know anything of your own need, your own helplessness, it will fall on your ear melodiously and thrillingly, like the news of freedom on that of the captive, of pardon on that of the criminal. God grant that, as there is nothing for us to do but to receive, none may be so infatuated as to reject! "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

SERMON II

THE SONG OF SIMEON

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."—ST. LUKE ii. 29, and three following verses.

IT is not important that we should ascertain much in respect of the speaker—Simeon by name—of this song; for we may discover the meaning and energy of the words without knowledge of the person by whom they were uttered. We have, indeed, no certain information with regard to Simeon beyond that furnished by the sacred historian. The common, and perhaps correct, opinion has been that he was a man of great age, as well as great piety, though nothing is said in Scripture from which we can definitely draw such conclusions. But, whatever his age, and whatever his condition in society—for this also is much disputed—his character is drawn in clear and beautiful lineaments. We are told that he was "just and devout"—a combination into which is gathered all that is excellent, for it expresses obedience to the two great commandments, that which enjoins the love of God, and that which enjoins the love of man. It is added of Simeon, that he was "waiting for the consolation of Israel." Like Daniel, when the time drew near for the deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, he had gathered from the study of prophecy

that the season was at hand which God had fixed for the manifestation of His mercy. He was, therefore, possessed with an intense expectation of the birth of the Messiah; but, at the same time, he looked for Him under a character which showed that he understood the true nature of His mission. He was waiting for "the consolation of Israel"—not, with the mass of his countrymen, expecting a temporal Prince, who should break the Roman yoke and lead the nation to sovereignty, but watching eagerly for a spiritual Redeemer, who should heal the broken-hearted and bind up their wounds.

And the faith and patience of Simeon had their reward. The Spirit of prophecy rested on this just and devout man—that Spirit which had not been vouchsafed from the days of Malachi to those of Zechariah. It was distinctly revealed to him by the Spirit, that he should not "see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ;" and very peculiar, yet very placid, must have been his feelings, as his sight grew dim and his pulse weak, and increasing decrepitude seemed to announce a speedy dissolution, and he, nevertheless, knew that he should not go down to the grave till he had beheld in the flesh "the Resurrection and the Life." Informed, then, by the Spirit that the long-expected Christ was about to enter the Temple, Simeon went up with feelings, we may suppose, which it were vain to attempt to describe; and no sooner had Joseph and Mary brought in the Child, than the old man took Him in his arms, and blessed God, and uttered the beautiful and expressive words which form our subject of discourse. We know of no finer picture than is thus presented to the imagination—old age gazing in rapture and reverence upon infancy, and the saint, on the verge of Heaven, adoring a helpless babe as the alone giver of the inheritance.

But without enlarging further on the faith and deportment of the aged disciple, let us turn to the consideration of the words which he uttered. We will arrange our remarks on these words under two divisions which they naturally suggest. In the first place, we will consider the readiness of Simeon to die so soon as he had beheld the Redeemer. In the second place, we will examine the description which he gives of the offices of the Christ—"A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

Now when Simeon was privileged to behold the Lord's Christ, he was just brought into the position in which we ourselves stand—he had still to exercise faith as to Christ's power to save, but there was no longer need for faith as to the fact of Christ's coming. Herein, we may believe, lay the reward which had been promised to the aged disciple; and, when the promise had been fulfilled, we may easily understand his readiness to depart. It might now be said that prophecies were accomplished, and that redemption from a predicted thing had become a performed. There was no longer room for that doubtfulness which perhaps was unavoidable at times in the best disciplined minds, whilst there were only the shadows of the law from which to collect the substance of the Gospel. Unto Simeon there was no longer any type, for he held the antitype in his arms: he no longer, with David, watched for the morning—the sun had crossed his horizon and was lighting up the firmament. "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It is as though he had said, I ask no more from mystic figures whether there will arise a Mediator between God and man; I strain no longer the mental vision that I may penetrate the future and behold a deliverer emerging from its depths: I hearken no longer to prophetic announce-

ments, inspiriting words indeed, but which, whilst they keep hope alive, prevent not the sickness of "hope long deferred." "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" I have looked upon the word of life; I have "handled the word of life;" and now what have I to wait for upon earth, seeing that I have thus been made sure of Heaven?

It must, we think, have been in this manner that the readiness to depart was the immediate effect of a sight of the Redeemer. Simeon had longed to behold the promised Messiah, that, ere he went down to the grave, he might know that God had "visited His people," and fasten his faith on the great Propitiator, seen "face to face," and not in the parables of the Mosaic economy. And God granted him his desire. But, when that was accomplished, for which alone he had desired to live, what had the aged man to detain him still longer in the flesh? I know not whether the hour of his dissolution followed quickly on that in which he "saw the Lord's Christ." It would seem indeed that he had been left on earth for one object, and perhaps, therefore, the day of Christ's presentation in the Temple was also the day of Simeon's presentation in Heaven. But, at all events, we may feel that he could now await death with a holy composure: he had taken that into his arms which made the path smooth, and scattered all its darkness; and the smile of an unearthly joy must have been on the old man's cheek, and the lustre of an unearthly light must have lit up his eye, when, feeling that the birth of the Saviour was the signal for his own dissolution, he exclaimed, in a voice whose accents were as much those of rapture as of resignation, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

But we cannot pass from this portion of our subject

without attempting to apply it personally to yourselves. We are sure, in regard of all of you, the young as well as the old, that the imagery of death sometimes forces itself on your notice, and that the wish of Balaam is occasionally your own, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." We care not what it may be which compels you, as it were, to think of the grave and of judgment, whether sickness, or a startling sermon, or the sudden decease of a relation or friend. Whatever be the cause, we rejoice that you are thus visited by thoughts of eternity, and of that solemn change which none of our race can escape. And we are persuaded that there is not one of you who, in the moments when he feels that he must die, would not look, with eager longing, on the picture of Simeon, if it were suddenly presented to his mind, and break into the passionate exclamation, Oh that I, too, when my last hour is at hand, might be able to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

And what is there to prevent our attaining the same confidence? Brethren, Simeon was a man "of like passions," and like failings, with ourselves; and the sources of his boldness and composure are all within our reach. He could depart in peace, because he had seen the salvation of the Lord. And the single question which we would press upon you is, Have you seen the Redeemer? We know that you have heard of Him. Year after year, it may be, you have joined the worshipping assembly, and listened to the message with which He charges His ambassadors. But have you seen Him? Remember how Job distinguished between the hearing and the seeing. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and

ashes." If you have obeyed the Scripture directions; if you have beheld the Lamb of God; if you have looked unto Jesus, lifted up as was the serpent in the wilderness, then have you been humbled under a sense of your own vileness—for the cross of Christ is as a glass which so reflects man's depravity that you must turn away confounded by the spectacle. Have you then seen Christ? Have you seen yourselves so that, conscious of your sinfulness, and of your utter moral helplessness, you have striven, with the dying Israelites, to fix your eye on that which God hath erected for the deliverance of the perishing? If not, you have nothing to do with the language of Simeon. There is nothing but a sight of Christ which can nerve you to face death. The hearing of Him will not do, for you may hear of a deliverer, but never bring him nigh; there must be the seeing Him, the bringing Him, by faith, into such proximity that He is actually at your side, and you know Him to be there. But indeed, beloved brethren, if you can say with Simeon, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, O Lord," you ought to feel his confidence as to departing hence in peace. It was not because permitted to take the infant in his arms, and to behold the Saviour, as we cannot behold Him, with his bodily eyes, that the aged disciple felt ready to die. It was, rather, because he then had a thorough assurance of an expiatory sacrifice which would remove all his sins. The sight of the Christ gave him this assurance, and far more should it give it us, since we see Him not only as the infant, but as the crucified and glorified "High Priest of our profession."

And why, if we do indeed thus behold in Jesus the propitiation for our sins, why should we not feel as Simeon felt in regard to departing out of life? It is

a solemn, yea, a fearful thing to die; for it is the undergoing the original curse, however much of the terror of that curse may have been extracted by Christ. Disguise it how we will, the truth is, that death is an enemy, and we cannot yield to an enemy without some portion of restlessness and aversion. Nevertheless, we may die in peace, for we may die confident that Christ "hath abolished death," and that the taking down of "the earthly house of this tabernacle" is only preparatory to our possessing "a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And we heartily thank God that the power and efficacy of a sight of the Redeemer are yet displayed, in instances of frequent occurrence, as vividly as in that of the disciple who had long "waited for the consolation of Israel." We go to the chambers of dying Christians, and there have we the same scene enacted as in the Temple at Jerusalem, when first entered by the Lord our Redeemer. What sustains the man in the agonies of dissolution? What enables his spirit to win that fine triumph over matter, so that he is composed amid all that can agitate? What mighty and mysterious agency is here at work, so that whilst distress and anguish are on the countenances of those who stand round in the full play of health, hope and serenity are on that of the worn-down invalid, as though the trying thing were to live and the easy thing were to die? We need not tell you that the only, but the sufficient, account to be given of this sublime demonstration how death can be "swallowed up in victory," is that the expiring man is beholding "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." And if you could bend down and catch the faint words which there is scarce strength to articulate, we can tell you that you would find the import of the last breathings to be precisely that of the language of

Simeon, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation;" therefore, O Lord, "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

But we turn, in the second place, to the considering the description which Simeon gives of the offices of the Christ —"a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." We know that this man of God spake by inspiration, and therefore we feel no surprise that he should have manifested such acquaintance with the extent and fulness of redemption, as might in vain have been looked for in others of his nation. There is nothing to be traced of those contracted views which were general, if not universal, amongst his countrymen. We have already said that, waiting, as he did, for the Messiah under the title of "the consolation of Israel," he showed that he was expecting deliverance from a heavier yoke than the Roman, and exaltation with which no human sovereignty could compare. And, accordingly, when his desire is gratified, and he beholds "the consolation," he breaks forth into expressions which prove that he well understood for what it was that a child was born and a son was given. He felt that he was looking on the salvation of God, but not a salvation provided exclusively for one solitary tribe. On the contrary, it was a salvation which the Lord had "prepared before the face of all people;" a salvation, that is, in which all nations were to have interest, and which, therefore, could not be that temporal deliverance for which the Jews looked.

Yet, though Simeon knew too well the objects of Christ's mission to agree with his countrymen in their vain expectations, he also knew that in a special manner was Messiah to be the Redeemer of Israel, and that, whilst there were consequences of his interference which would embrace all the ends of the earth, there

were others which would be limited to the posterity of Abraham. Therefore he did not use only general phrases, but accurately distinguished between the Jew and the Gentile. "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Why, this is the very summary of the prophecies vouchsafed under the old dispensation. It is itself an ample prediction, comprehending within its range the spiritual history of mankind to the consummation of all things. Let us take it as the prediction, or, at least, as a description, which will not cease to be accurate whilst there is a Gentile to be converted or a Jew to be restored. "A light to lighten the Gentiles." There is no figure more common in Scripture, and none more beautiful, than that by which Christ is compared to light. Incomprehensible in its nature, itself the first visible, and that by which all other things are seen, light represents to us Christ, whose generation none can declare, but who must shine upon us ere we can know ought aright, whether of divine things or of human. Itself pure and uncontaminated, though visiting the basest parts of the earth, and penetrating its most noisome recesses, what does light image, if not that undefiled Mediator, who contracted no stain, though born of a woman, in the likeness of sinful flesh? Instrumental in all the processes of vegetation, so that without its vivifying power the earth could not wear its diadem of verdure, what is light but the emblem of that source of all animation respecting whom the Evangelist declares, "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men?"

And, without searching too narrowly into particulars in which the resemblance might be proved, who can question that the rising of Christ Jesus was to the moral world what that of the sun is to the natural?

At the birth of Jesus it was virtually said, as once before when darkness covered the face of the deep, "Let there be light, and there was light." In no district of the earth, not even in Judæa, though privileged with revelation, was there anything that can be called the dawning of the day. Types there were, and significative ceremonies, and mysterious emblems, but these could not constitute day; at best they were but as the twilight which gave promise of a morning. And if this be all we can affirm of Judæa, then, certainly, over other lands brooded a darkness which might be felt. Here and there were lingering traces of patriarchal religion; but these, if even deep and vivid enough to constitute twilight, constituted only that twilight which follows the departure, not that which heralds the coming, of the sun; for every year saw the gathering of a thicker gloom, and streak after streak grow dim upon the firmament. And what was reason, that lamp which, now that it has stolen fire from revelation, blazes with a lustre which some fondly think sufficient for their guidance—what was reason effecting for a benighted world, when it had no rival to dispute with it the moral illumination? We will not weary you with the story of idolatry and superstition; we will not investigate at length the deformities of the best systems of natural theology, which philosopers could devise and potentates introduce. It is little to say that the world was left in darkness. It was not merely the darkness of midnight, which may be resting over glorious and beautiful scenery. It was the darkness of the sepulchre, athwart which if you throw a single beam it is only to disclose what is foul and revolting. We can still judge what the darkness was. Though our own land be nobly irradiated by moral light—for upon us hath "the Sun of righteousness arisen with heal-

ing in His wings"—we have only to look on the yet vast domains of heathenism, in order to know man's condition where there has been no manifestation of Christ. It is a condition at which we blush to look; for it is something of degradation to ourselves to belong to a race which can be so degraded. The feeble shinings of reason are lost in the ponderous obscurity: man makes his gods; and you can add nothing to this description of moral and intellectual debasement.

And such was the state of the whole Gentile world when Simeon gave his testimony to the offices of Christ. Was the testimony exaggerated?—rather, has it not, to the very letter, been justified by the event? Wheresoever the Gospel has been published, and received as a communication from God, the darkness has fled, as night flies before the sun. Ye know this. Ye know that the revelation, made through Christ, has dispersed, wherever vouchsafed, the clouds of ignorance and superstition, reillumined reason, and given purity to morals. It hath done more. It hath hung the very grave with bright lamps, and rekindled the blazings of the almost quenched immortality. Have not, then, the words of Isaiah received accomplishment, in exact proportion that knowledge of Christ has been diffused, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined?" It was a fine burst of the prophetic spirit, when Simeon, standing in a temple from which Gentiles were excluded, pronounced the infant who then entered its precincts "a light to lighten the Gentiles." From the central point of a limited and repulsive dispensation he proclaimed the introduction of an enlarged and most glorious dispensation. Past time has been making good

his prophecy—an earnest that future time will verify its every letter. Indeed, "the light that is to lighten the Gentiles" hath yet dawned only on few of the household, and fewer of the hearts, of the human population. But if there were to come a day when "the kingdoms of the world" shall "become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ;" when Christianity shall be the religion of every land, and rear its temple in every breast, the prediction before us is assured of a perfect fulfilment. And the whole Bible is our witness that such a day will yet dawn. Let it break on this creation—and, as the giant fabric of Paganism crumbles into nothingness, and hypocrisy and formality depart from professing Christendom, and the globe, in all its circumference, bears nothing but sincere worshippers of Jesus, animated by the hopes, and elevated by the motives, which are derived from His atonement, will there not be proof that Simeon spake by the Spirit of the living God, and that he gathered not too much, though he gathered the whole world within the predicted irradiation, when he described what seemed nothing but a lonely spark, which a breath might extinguish, as a light which should finally lighten all the Gentiles?

But this is not all. Simeon forgot not his own nation, whilst announcing what Christ would be to the Gentiles. If Christ came as "a light to lighten the Gentiles," He came also as "the glory of His people Israel." What meant the aged man by this? and of what did the prophetic spirit thus give intimation? Shall we think that Simeon saw nothing of the ruin which was coming on Judæa, and that He supposed that Messiah would be hailed with rapture by his countrymen? Would he have spoken of Christ as "the glory" of the Israelites, had he beheld them reject Him with scorn and indignation, and then

paying the just penalties of their crimes in wretchedness and exile? Certainly Simeon knew well enough that, though Christ came to His own, His own would receive Him not. There can be no doubt upon this. Observe how—according to what follows soon after our text—Simeon speaks to Mary, the mother of our Lord: "This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against—yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." Could words more strongly express that Christ's career would be a career of suffering and of ignominy, and that, to numbers of the Jews, He would prove only "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence?" We may be sure, then, that it was with the distinct knowledge of all that was about to happen in Judæa, that Simeon described Christ as "the glory of His people Israel." How are we to understand this? and how was this verified? Was Christ "the glory of His people Israel," when Israel spat upon Him, and buffeted Him, and crucified Him? Was He the glory of Israel, when He came in vengeance, and trampled under foot those by whom He had been rejected, and scattered them to the four winds of Heaven? We can scarcely affirm this. The cross on which Christ died; the woe and the wasting which came upon Jerusalem; the dispersion of the Jews over the whole habitable globe—if these are our proofs that Christ is "the glory of His people Israel," we can hardly expect to convince you of the fact. Already has Christ proved Himself "a light to lighten the Gentiles;" but we doubt whether it can equally be said, that already has Christ proved Himself "the glory of His people Israel."

It was, therefore, we believe, of yet future times that Simeon spake. Is it true—does prophecy inti-

mate—that, as a nation, the Jews will be restored to their own land; and that there, acknowledging and adoring the Messiah whom their fathers put to death, and whose most holy name themselves had blasphemed, they will rise into sovereignty, and become, in the magnificent words of Isaiah, "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of their God?" Then we can at once understand that Christ will be "the glory of His people Israel." He is to be their Deliverer and their King: under Him the scattered and oppressed will be triumphantly gathered, tread on the neck of every foe, and be made to "ride on the high places of the earth." Ah! if indeed we have Scriptural authority for believing that all this will come to pass, then have we every proof that there was passing before Simeon's view, as he took the infant Jesus in his arms, the sublime events of which this earth has yet to be the scene; and that his gaze was upon all with which Prophecy has magnificently peopled the last days of our Creation, when he described the Messiah by this striking combination, "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

There remains nothing but that we earnestly exhort you that you inquire, each for himself, whether "the dayspring from on high" hath visited your souls? Is Christ a light to you, showing you yourselves, your danger, and your safety? Are you "walking in the light, as He is in the light?" Alas! you may have a zeal for God, and that zeal not be according to knowledge. This is heat without light; and heat without light is the character, says Archbishop Leighton, of the fire of Hell. Therefore we do not ask whether you are earnest in battling for what is orthodox, vehement in opposing heresy and schism

and forward in enterprises for the spread of Christianity. All this is well: but all this is heat, and may subsist without light. Have you seen your lost estate by nature? Have you discovered "the plague of your own hearts?" Have you detected the imperfection of your own righteousness? Have you looked on Him whom you have pierced, and can you say to Him, with the Psalmist, "In thy light shall we see light?" We cannot answer these questions for you: you must answer them for yourselves. And we trust there are many of you who can humbly declare, with the man in the Gospel, "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." May God increase the number. May God give to all of us earnest and simple faith, that we may take, as it were, the holy child in our arms, and feel that, if summoned to die, we could exclaim, with the rapturous resignation of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

SERMON III

THE DAYS OF OLD

"I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times."—PSALM lxxvii. 5.

IN this Psalm David describes himself as labouring under great grief and disquietude of mind. "I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed." "Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak." These are the expressions of one on whom affliction pressed heavily, and who had lost the consolation which the godly man, when under chastisement, generally enjoys. In this his darkness and dreariness, the Psalmist employed himself, amongst other things, in musing upon former days—days in which perhaps he had enjoyed more of sensible communion with his God. It does not, however, appear that he gathered any comfort from the retrospect; for almost immediately afterwards he breaks into the pathetic and plaintive questions: "Will the Lord cast off for ever; and will He be favourable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" The impression upon David's mind would seem to have been, that times had changed for the worse; that there was not the same amount of graciousness on God's part, or that the righteous were placed in circum-

stances of greater difficulty and perplexity. And this, or something akin to this, is very frequently a result of considering "the days of old, the years of ancient times."

You must all be aware what a softening power there is in distance; how often an object, on which we gaze with great delight whilst beheld afar off, will lose its attractiveness when it is brought near. This is the case with objects in the natural landscape; it also holds good in regard of what we may call the moral landscape. For example, whilst friends are with us, and we are mingling in the various intercourses of life, we are alive to their defects and inconsistencies; to those inequalities of temper, or roughnesses of manner, which are often allied with most amiable qualities. But when the grave has closed upon them, and we can contemplate them only by looking back, we rapidly forget what was displeasing or repulsive, and come to the having no impression but one of unfeigned, though melancholy, admiration. And more than this—we are all inclined to look with a favourable eye on past times; so that from the landscape—if we may so express it—of a bygone century, there will vanish, in a great degree, all base and misshapen things, and there will settle on that landscape a kind of golden halo, giving indistinctness to what would offend the eye, and greater prominence to all on which it can rest with approval. In short, men are disposed, according to a saying of Solomon, to reckon that former days were better than present: old persons, more especially, how fond are they of talking of the degeneracy of the times, and of referring to days when they were young, as days in which all things were in a healthier and more pleasing condition?

The truth is, that the feelings of the old person are

greatly altered; and he transfers to the world the alteration which has taken place in himself. He has no longer the vivacity, and the play of fancy, and the glow of sentiment which he had in early life, and he ascribes that decay to the power of pleasing, which really exists only in the power of enjoying. And something of the feeling which we thus refer to—something of this looking with regret upon past days, as though they must have been better than present—would seem to have been found in David, when he had set himself, according to our text, to the remembrance of ancient times. He gathered little but discouragement from the remembrance: he came back, oppressed with gloomier thoughts as to the existing dealings of God. But the Psalmist was wrong in this. There is no sufficient reason for looking with regret on days that are gone, as more advantageous, more favourable to righteousness, than those in which our own lot is cast. And we desire to take this as our present subject of discourse. We will take some few cases in which the remembrance of past times is apt to suggest disparaging reflections in regard of the present; and we will endeavour, in each case, to show you that a righteous man is not justified in falling into gloom and despondency, when he has been employing himself, as David had been, "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times."

Now, how common is the feeling that, as the world grows older, it has grown more depraved, so that we live in days which, as abounding more in iniquity, must be less favourable to piety. But it ought to be carefully observed, in regard of human nature, that it did not grow corrupt by degrees, but became, all at once, as bad as it ever was to be. You must not think that, through Adam's transgression, human nature became, to a certain extent,

evil, and that afterwards it gradually deteriorated, till it reached its lowest point of depravity. It reached that point at once: when it fell, it fell the whole length down which it could ever descend, and became instantly capable of every crime and every atrocity which can now be committed in the old age of the world. There are few things more worthy of being pondered than this. There is a disposition towards extenuating the effects of the first sin, as though they had not been disastrous and fatal. The sin itself is represented as inconsiderable, and its consequences are explained away, if not altogether denied. But if the first sin were only the eating of an apple, almost the second was the murder of a brother. So vitiated, so abandoned had human nature instantaneously become, that a crime which, even now, confounds by its enormity, and the report of the commission of which will send a thrill of horror through a neighbourhood, and almost through a country, was perpetrated in the very infancy of wickedness, when the Paradise of God had been but lately lost, and perhaps within sight of the glorious enclosure. It is not, then, that our nature passed from bad to worse, and that the human heart went through one state of depravity after another, till it could justly be characterised by the description, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Mysterious as it may seem, the matter of fact appears clearly to have been, that the corruption of human nature was not a work of time, but the work literally of a moment. The being, who had been formed in the very image of his Maker, became instantly capable of the most heinous of crimes; and so far was our nature from requiring long familiarity with wickedness, in order to the learning to commit it in its most atrocious shapes,

that well-nigh its first essay, after apostatizing from God, was one which still fills us with horror, notwithstanding our daily acquaintance with a thousand foul deeds. And having thus shown itself, in the person of Cain, capable of the very worst crimes, our nature went on to prove that this was no solitary instance, but that it was corrupt to the core in the whole mass of men.

You will all remember in how short a time the earth was completely overrun with wickedness, so that God used the surprising expression, "It repenteth me that I have made man upon the earth;" and proceeded to take a tremendous vengeance, by bringing a flood upon the globe, which swept away all but eight of the guilty population. There is, therefore, no room for the supposition that human nature has grown gradually worse, more depraved, and more dissolute. The whole strength of evidence bears the other way: sin was never an infant; it was a giant in the very birth. And forasmuch as we should have had precisely the same evil nature, wherever we had lived, it would be very hard to show that any former period would have been better for us than the present. You may fix on a time when there was apparently less of open wickedness: but this would not necessarily have been a better time for individual piety—the religion of the heart perhaps flourishes most when there is most to move to zeal for the insulted law of God. You may fix on a time when there was apparently less of misery: but we need not say that this would not necessarily, and not even probably, have been a better time for growth in Christian holiness, seeing that, confessedly, it is amongst the deepest sorrows that the strongest graces are produced. So that, if a man regard himself as a candidate for immortality, we can defy him to put his finger on an age of the past, in which, as compared with

the present, it would necessarily have been more advantageous for him to have lived. The heart of man having in every age been equally corrupt, and the government of God equally merciful, and equally impartial, the grand sources of happiness and unhappiness have never undergone change; and therefore we can have no right, as rational and accountable creatures, to suppose that we should have been better off, had our lot been cast in any former period.

Away, then, with that repining, in which some are prone to indulge, that the times are grown fearfully worse, offering greater causes for misery, or greater obstacles to piety, than existed in certain days to which they look back with regret. I know not—and they know not, however confidently they may speak—whether or not what they count greater do indeed exceed in magnitude. But of this I can be confident, from the known course of God's dealings, that, if there be greater causes of misery, there are deeper springs of comfort; that, if greater be the obstacles, greater are the assistances to piety. And the old may speak feelingly to the young of the superiority of the times when themselves were in their youth; and the young may dwell admiringly on some bright page of history, thinking that, had they lived when such a champion witnessed for truth, or such a hero fought for liberty, or such a glory rested on a land, they should have had ampler opportunities of becoming wise, or illustrious, or happy. But we affirm to old and young, that they are but cherishing a delusion; or rather, upholding a falsehood; seeing that, forasmuch as human nature was equally corrupt in former days as in later, no one can have right to come back with melancholy sentiments from such a contemplation as that in which David had been

engaged when he said, "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times."

But we will now follow out another thought which such a contemplation is likely to suggest. A man may muse on the evidences of Christianity, and may fancy that these evidences would have been stronger had he lived nearer to the times when Christianity was introduced. Many are disposed to imagine that if, with their own eyes, they could see miracles wrought, they should have a proof on the side of Christianity far more convincing than any which they actually have; and that there would be no room whatever for a lingering doubt if they stood by a professed teacher from God whilst he stilled the tempest, or raised the dead. Here, as they think, is a clear and most important respect in which it is saddening to consider the days of old; and they seem to have armed themselves with a reason which goes direct to the overthrow of our foregoing argument. But that there is a fallacy in their reason ought to be clear from the fact that thousands who saw the miracles of Christ were not convinced by them of the truth of His pretensions. It must be quite idle to think that the beholding a miracle would necessarily scatter all doubt and overcome all unbelief, when it is notorious that the great mass of the Jewish people remained obstinately infidel, though there had been wrought in their presence the most amazing of wonders. And, indeed, why should such superior power be supposed to reside in the seeing a miracle? The only thing to be sure upon is that a miracle has been wrought. There are two ways of gaining this assurance: the one is by the testimony of the senses, the other by the testimony of competent witnesses. The former way is granted to the spectator of a miracle; only the latter to those who are

not present at the performance. But shall it be said that the latter must necessarily be less satisfactory than the former? Shall it be said that those who have not seen a thing are necessarily less sure of its existence than others who have? Shall it be said that those who have not visited Constantinople cannot be as certain that there is such a city as others who have? This is idle talking. The testimony of witnesses may be every jot as conclusive as the testimony of our own senses. I may be quite as sure of a thing which I have only heard of, as of a thing which I have seen; of a fact related in history, as of a fact occurring before my eyes.

We will not, therefore, for a moment admit that we are disadvantaged by being placed at a distance from the commencement of Christianity. We contend that there is such an unbroken chain of witnesses between the actual spectator of the miracles, and ourselves who stand in the last days of the world, that whoever will follow it, link by link, may as thoroughly certify himself, and on grounds as sufficient, of the facts that Christ healed the sick and cast out the demons, as if centuries were annihilated, and he stood side by side with the wonder-working Being. Though, even if we are forced to acknowledge that the spectator of a miracle has necessarily a superiority over those to whom the miracle travels down in the annals of well-attested history, we should be far enough from admitting that there was less evidence now on the side of Christianity than was granted to the men of some preceding age. Let it be that the evidence from miracle is not as clear and powerful as it was—what is to be said to the evidence from prophecy? Who will venture to deny that, as century has rolled away after century, fresh witness has been given to the Bible

by the accomplishment of the predictions recorded in its pages? The stream of evidence has been like that beheld in mystic vision by Ezekiel, when waters issued out from the Eastern gate of the Temple. At first, and for a time, that stream was inconsiderable; the waters were only to the ankles of the beholder. But rapidly did the stream deepen, till there were "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." Every age has made its contributions; the further the river has flowed, the deeper has it become. What, then, if the testimony from miracle weaken in proportion to the distance from the time of its performance? Have we not in the midst of us a standing miracle—a miracle perpetually wrought, even the turning (oh! more wondrous than the turning of water into wine) —the turning of prophecy into history? Vary the illustration, and we may safely say that Christianity has enthroned herself on the spoils of Time, and that no age has passed without bringing its tribute and laying it submissively at her feet. We cannot content ourselves with arguing that past days were not better than present; we would go farther, and claim for the present superiority over the past. We are bold to affirm that those who heard the Christian religion from the lips of Apostles, and saw it confirmed by their miracles, had nothing like that accumulated evidence on the side of the faith which is accessible to ourselves in the old age of the world. Scepticism was more excusable, for belief was more difficult, whilst the religion was new, though wonders heralded and encircled it, than now that it is ancient; and its very antiquity—for has it not had to live as the spark in the ocean?—is a sufficient demonstration that God was its author.

Yes, the Christian religion now appeals to mightier proofs than when it first engaged in combat with the super-

stitions of the world. Its own protracted existence, its own majestic triumph, witness for it with a voice more commanding than that which was heard when its first preachers called to the dead, and were answered by their starting into life. Its accomplished predictions—Jerusalem still trodden down of the Gentiles; the Jews dispersed hither and thither, mingled with every people, and yet everywhere distinct; the rise and spread of Mahometanism; the corruptions of the Papacy—all these attest the divinity of its origin, and that, too, with an emphasis which could not be exceeded if the firmament were crowded with portents, and the earth heaved beneath prodigies. Away, then, with the thought that it had been better for those who are dissatisfied with the evidences of Christianity, had they been born when Christianity was first promulgated upon earth. The man who is complaining of the want of sensible proof—who is excusing a disposition towards scepticism by pleading that there is no testimony which his senses can appreciate—we come down on that man with a charge that he forgets what belongs to him as a rational creature, when he thus puts slight on the evidence of witnesses; and then with a demonstration, that there is an array of proof now on the side of Christianity far outshining that which was displayed when Apostles and apostolical men raised the standard of the cross and bade a world do homage. What right, then, can he have to think that he would have been more likely to have believed Christianity, that he should have found more to incline him towards Christianity, had he lived in ancient days, when the religion was yet new, and its first publishers were on the earth? Oh, vain supposition! Ascribe what advantages you will to former times, yet, so long as miracles are made known to us through a long line of

unimpeachable witnesses, and so long as prophecy is a standing miracle, always being wrought, and always with an ever-growing emphasis and force, you will be unable to find, in your search through bygone years, a single period in which it would have been better for you that your lot should have been cast; and therefore ought you never, so far as the evidences of Christianity are concerned, to return in a melancholy or complaining mood from a contemplation such as that in which David had engaged, "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times."

But your feeling may be—and this seems more nearly akin to what would appear to have been the feeling of the Psalmist—that if former days did not furnish greater facilities for believing the Christian religion, they did for acquiring the Christian character. We are sometimes disposed to contrast the Christianity of present days with that of past, and to pronounce it meagre and dwarfish in comparison. We look with a kind of awe and wonder upon men who gladly gave up everything for religion, whom danger could not daunt, whom death itself could not terrify, but who, in the face of the worst forms of persecution, held fast their profession, and kept unsullied their loyalty to the Saviour. When we compare such men with ourselves, too often inclined to murmur at the least sacrifice, and to shrink from the least peril in the cause of our God and Redeemer, the natural, and, in some senses, the just feeling is, that the times have grown worse—less favourable to individual piety, and to the nurture of those graces which should characterize the Christian. And perhaps it scarcely admits a doubt that there was piety of a higher order, a more generous and uncalculating devotedness to God, in seasons when the Church was

vehemently assaulted from without, than in days such as these, when the secular power is engaged to support Christianity.

But, nevertheless, we are far enough from being disposed to allow that the times to which we refer were necessarily more adapted than the present for the developing Christian principle and the producing Christian greatness. We have so thorough a belief in the sameness of human nature, and in the accuracy with which God proportions the supplies of His Spirit to the emergencies of human conditions, that we can never regard it as owing to a difference in the times that there is a difference in piety. Ay, and we can go even further than this, and express our full confidence that, amid all which is bewailed as the degeneracy of the age, there is a vast deal of staunch and sterling religion—religion which, if there have been yet no menaces to call out its energies, would show more and more of the power of resistance as persecution grew bolder and bolder, till, at length, the sword might be drawn without turning it pale, and the fires be lighted without making it blench. I, for one, have no share in the common persuasion that a season of persecution would be a season of apostasy. I know well enough that mere nominal Christians could not be proof against the terrors of martyrdom. I know well enough that, even where the Christianity is not merely nominal, some would be found too little grounded in the truth, and too weak in faith, to confess Christ at the stake or on the scaffold. But I know also that there are Christians in our cities and our villages, who have in them all the elements out of which martyrs and confessors were made. They may not even themselves be conscious of those elements. They may not feel as though they could be ready, with a smile upon

the cheek, and a song upon the lip, to advance towards the death to which a tyrant had doomed them. But this is only because they are not doomed to martyrdom, and because God proportions His grace to existing, not to prospective trials. The promise is, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Let the trial be that of martyrdom, and the grace would be that of martyrdom; so that we should again have the magnificent spectacle of those who had thought themselves timid, and who, in a day of peace, had feared that their constancy would not be proof against trouble, displaying a heroism and a patience which struck wonder into foes, and almost forced the savage executioners to fall down and worship them as something more than human.

We cannot then agree with the supposition that the piety of our own day would not stand the ordeal of persecution. Had martyrs lived in our times, they would have been the assiduous, zealous, humble, self-denying believers, of whom, blessed be God, there is yet a goodly company in the land. And these believers would have been the martyrs, had they lived in the times when the profession of pure Christianity exposed men to death. It is not that, strictly speaking, circumstances make moral heroes—for such may martyrs be called: it is that God gives men grace proportioned to the circumstances in which they are placed; so that he who is the meek and quiet Christian in a day of peace, would have braved the stake in a day of battle, and he who defied tortures in a season of persecution, might have been the gentle and retired character in a season of tranquillity. We dwell upon this, in order, if possible, to do away the thought that "the years of old," "the ancient days," have been better than these in the sense of having been more favour-

able to growth in Christian graces. All years, all days, have their special and appropriate trials and duties; and he who bears meekly, and performs assiduously, what falls to his own time, has no cause to inquire as to endurances and actions of those of another time—no cause, we mean, to inquire with any feelings of solicitude, as though he were less advantageously circumstanced for acquiring that holiness which constitutes man's fitness for the heavenly inheritance. Depend upon it, the Psalmist had no sufficient ground, after employing himself in the manner described in our text, "Considering the years of old, the days of ancient times," to entertain the desponding feelings expressed by the words, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" God hath not "forgotten to be gracious."

There is nothing in the retrospect of former days to warrant the belief, or even the suspicion, that any difference in piety is to be accounted for by a difference in external circumstances. Satan was as powerful, sin was as powerful, in former days as in present. The mercy-seat did not stand more open then than it does now. Christ did not plead with greater persuasiveness; the Spirit did not strive with greater energy. If ye are not eminent in Christian graces now, ye would never have been. It is not climate which makes the spiritual plant flourish; or rather, God provides that it shall be our own fault if it do not always flourish equally. When persecuted, we may be, as it were, in a hothouse; but there may be as much of genial warmth in the clear summer sun, when persecution is succeeded by peace. We do not, then, deter you from imitating the Psalmist in the meditation recorded in our text. It is a good thing that ye be sent to travel in thought over days that are past, for you may

bring back from the journey the experience of the Church, and an abundant store of things "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness." But as for bringing back gloomy and melancholy thoughts, the material of comparison between the past and the present, and that comparison one which shall make you seem disadvantaged in your religious capacity by living now rather than in some former period—oh, rely on it, this is but a sinful delusion! With your own hearts what they are, with God what He is, with Christ what He is, with the Holy Ghost what He is, you would have had exactly as much difficulty and exactly as much assistance, the same perils and the same powers, the same trials and the same helps, in working out your salvation, at whatever stage you had been placed in that long march of time, which passes in solemn shadow before you, when you have set yourselves to do what David here describes himself as doing: "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times."

Let, then, no man think to excuse a deficiency, by pleading that, in the days wherein his lot is cast, there is less to produce Christian excellence, and call out Christian virtues. Of this I am confident, that there can be no reason why the Christian of the present day should not be as holy as the Christian of any preceding; and I regard holiness as the root of the matter: its manifestation may at one time be the courage of the martyr, at another the integrity of the tradesman: but the difference in the manifestation only corresponds to the difference in the season; the holiness itself may be equally genuine in the two cases, and equally great. What then? I would never so consider the years of old, the days of ancient times, as to produce or encourage the thought that I might then have enjoyed better oppor-

tunities, and greater facilities, for acquiring the Christian character. Nay, and more than this—in place of murmuring, I could rather make it cause of thankfulness, that my lot was not cast in earlier days. In place of thinking that it might have been better for me, had I lived in other times, I could praise the Lord that I live when so many centuries have bequeathed to us their rich legacies of experience. It ought to make me more hopeful, more confident, for the future, that there is so much in the past on which to rest, and from which to draw lessons.

Martyrs and confessors, for us they struggled, for us they died. Worthies of an olden time, men, each, like the sun, going down in his brightness, and throwing gorgeously the gold and the vermilion over the whole circle of the horizon, for us they were illustrious in their life, and glorious in their death. The cloud of witnesses—that cloud which is as the pillar of fire to wanderers in the wilderness—has been continually on the increase; and now, in the old age of the world, it has a depth and luminousness which should make us grateful that we have had so many precursors in the path which we must tread. I do feel it an immeasurable privilege that we live in days when God's course of dealing with the righteous has been ascertained to us by a long succession of witnesses. The latter day is precious to the Christian, because he can send back his gaze over a lengthened line of the records of the Church, a line thronged at every point with beckoning forms, which show him the heavenward path, and tell him its nature as well as its end. I regret not, then, that I lived not in days when—though probably this is but imagination—there was less of open impiety than at present, and apparently more to encourage and foster righteousness.

If I dared to have a wish, it would be to have been born yet later in the world. In considering the years of old, the days of ancient times, the feeling produced in me is a longing for future times rather than for past. Privileged to live when there were harbingers of Christ's second coming, who would not desire to witness that august event, with which stands associated whatsoever is brilliant in the history of this creation? Yet there is no need for such a wish as this. We have the Apostle's express assurance that they which are alive shall not prevent, or take precedence of, those that are asleep. Then, if we be but the true and faithful followers of Christ, we shall have share in all the glories of the future. Come the magnificence of descent, the pomp of judicature, the renovation of the earth, the grave shall not hide these wonders from our view: the trumpet will have been heard, and the dead in Christ are to "rise first."

Thus has God so graciously arranged His dealings with the Church, that no generation of Christians has cause to look, with anything like envy, either on a past or a future. The past is a treasure-house of experience which we cannot wish diminished: the future, of glories in which the men of all ages may equally have share. And, therefore, live when we may, it would argue want of faith to wish that it had been appointed to us to live in yet later days; want of gratitude, and of a sense of some of our best privileges, to be depressed at considering, with David, "the days of old, the years of ancient times." The upshot of the whole is, that, contentedly and thankfully, we make use of the advantages which God has been pleased to bestow, in providing our mercies and our opportunities, in the humble but earnest assurance that there is no prize, in all the allotments of eternity, which

is not within reach of the righteous of our own day, as it was of those who lived before us, as it shall be of those who will come after. Fight the good fight, quit you like men, be strong: then shall you gloriously enter heaven yourselves, and leave an example to others, when they shall consider "the days of old, the years of ancient times."

SERMON IV

OMISSIONS OF SCRIPTURE

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."—ST. JOHN xxi. 25.

THERE can be no controversy that the Evangelist here employs language which is not to be taken in its literal sense; and there can be as little that he represents the recorded actions of our Saviour as bearing but an inconsiderable proportion to those of which no account has been preserved. It were absurd to contend for the literal truth of the assertion that, had all which Jesus did been written, the world itself would have been too small for the volumes. But then we may be certain that St. John would not have used such exaggerated terms, had not the written been vastly exceeded in amount by the unwritten. And this is all which we would gather from the passage. There may be senses, at which we shall afterwards glance, in which it holds good that the world would not have contained the complete register of Christ's actions. But the simple fact, that far more was omitted, than related, by the Evangelists—every one must allow that this is asserted in the text; and on this, with the inferences which it naturally furnishes, we would employ our discourse, and fix your attention.

Now, we must all be well assured that there could not

have been a single day in the life of our Saviour which did not furnish something worthy to be recorded. From His birth to His death there must have been much of the wonderful, and mysterious round a being who united, in one person, the divine nature and the human. Speaking as never man spake, and endowed with unlimited power, we believe that Christ uttered not a word which would have been unimportant if preserved, and wrought not an action whose narrative would have been without interest and instruction. Yet the Gospels are almost silent on the first thirty years of our Saviour's life, and confine themselves to the brief period of His public ministrations. They pass over the seasons of childhood and youth, seasons in regard of which we feel the greatest curiosity—for who does not wish to trace the growth of "the second man," "the Lord from Heaven," and to know in what degree, and with what gradual development, the majesty of the Eternal shone out through the feebleness of the created? The only fact related of the youth of our Lord—His dispute with the doctors in the Temple—is wondrously adapted to stimulate this curiosity; for it sufficiently assures us that His earlier, as well as His later, years were characterized with supernatural manifestations. And when we read, that, after this surprising display of a more than human wisdom, Christ went down with His parents to Nazareth, and was subject unto them, we long to follow Him into the privacies of the domestic circle, and to know the particulars of an intercourse, which can never be paralleled, between a child, who, though from everlasting, grew like others "in wisdom and in stature," and a mother who may have known in Him the Son of the Highest.

It cannot, therefore, be said that what was omitted was

unimportant, or uninteresting, however we may be persuaded that selection was made with distinct reference to what would be for our good. We should have read with eagerness the account of all that occurred before Christ was baptized of John in the Jordan; and it could scarcely have failed that the narrative would have instructed us, as well as delighted. Neither is it only in respect of the youth of the Redeemer that much has been omitted by the Evangelists. Even if you take the Gospels as the history of Christ's life during the period of His public ministrations, the memoir seems deficient in many particulars. We are told, for example, little or nothing of Jesus in private. There is a mysteriousness about His retirements which we have no power of penetrating. We hear of His withdrawing to a mountain, and spending whole nights in prayer. But we cannot accompany Him to the oratory, and are left in utter ignorance as to the petitions which He presented to the Father. We may judge, from the 17th chapter of St. John's Gospel, that the prayers of Christ must have contained most sublime and consolatory truths; so that a collection of those prayers would have been inestimably precious. Yet the Evangelists can scarcely be said to admit us at all to the devotions of the Saviour—we have none but the briefest notices of the subject-matter of His communings with God.

Now, whilst we cannot deny, either that much has been omitted, or that what was omitted would have been valuable, we are bound to feel assured, since we have all which the Holy Spirit was pleased to select, that enough has been transmitted for every purpose, whether of practice or faith. Here is the first great inference from our text, namely, that Scripture must be sufficient, without the aids of tradition. If the Holy Ghost guided the

writers of the New Testament as to what they should record, and what omit, out of the vast mass of material which the life of Christ presented, we are bound to believe that everything was inserted in the volume which it was either necessary or desirable that we should possess. With such a passage as our text before you, you have only to admit the inspiration, and you admit also the sufficiency of Scripture. Indeed, it is quite true that the New Testament presents the record of only an inconsiderable part of the discourses and actions of Christ. But then it is just as true that this part was taken, and the rest was left, under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God. What, then, is it but to accuse this Spirit of mistake and infirmity, to suppose, with the Roman Church, that the written word needs the assistance of tradition, and that we cannot form a complete system of doctrine, if we adhere exclusively to what we find in the Scriptures? It is on the Bible, and the Bible alone, that Protestantism takes its stand. We embrace everything which can be proved from Scripture: we exclude everything which cannot be proved from Scripture. We take, as our fundamental principle, that God has made a revelation of Himself and of His will, and left no deficiencies in that revelation to be supplied from precarious and irresponsible sources. We go, therefore, the whole length of the Bible, but refuse to stir a step on the authority of additions to the Bible. Here is a great line of demarcation between Protestantism and Popery. Here has a great battle to be fought; for on the rejection of traditions hangs the rejection of a main part of the idolatries and inventions with which Christianity has been deformed, and almost destroyed.

But now, draw a second inference from the alleged fact

that only a small portion of Christ's actions have been recorded by the Evangelists. It must, we suppose, follow from this that the miracles related in the Gospels are but specimens of the works of wonder which Jesus wrought whilst on earth. As it is, they form an amazing catalogue; so that, had there been no miracles besides those recorded, they seem sufficient to overcome the most determined infidelity. But what a supplement to this catalogue is the text on which we now discourse. After relating miracle upon miracle, the healing of the sick, the giving sight to the blind, the feeding a multitude with a few loaves, the raising the dead—what a conclusion to a history is the saying, that "there were many other things which Jesus did," the which, if written, would have filled the whole world. It is as much as saying that He was busied every moment with a new work of benevolence and power. He could never have been an instant idle, and never employed but on something wonderful. Indeed, we cannot fail to be surprised, when we peruse the Gospels, at the infidelity and scorn with which the pretensions of Christ were received. It seems to us well-nigh inexplicable that the spectators of such miracles as are recorded at length should have refused to own in Jesus a teacher sent from God.

But if we would fully know how inexcusable the Jews were in their unbelief, and what an amount of evidence they withstood, we must add the unwritten things to the written. There could have been no ignorance as to the miracles of Jesus. They could not have been confined to any one place or district. Wheresoever the Redeemer was, and by whomsoever attended, His actions must have borne witness to His greatness. And thus the whole nation must, as it were, have been pervaded by manifestations of His Godhead; and there could scarcely

have been a spot in the land which had not been the scene of some supernatural deed. Christ must have moved to and fro, a being whose very presence seemed to overawe evil in all shapes but that of the "heart of unbelief"—not occasionally displaying extraordinary power, and then apparently shrinking back into an ordinary man; but so incessantly engaged in things beyond human strength, that He could not be seen, and not known, as the wonderful. It is altogether an overwhelming consideration that we have not been told the thousandth part of the miracles of Jesus. It is overwhelming, as showing us how incalculable the amount of proof which unbelief can resist: overwhelming, as also proving how incalculable the amount of evidence by which Christianity was substantiated when first introduced. There might be mistake or deception in one or two miracles. But a life of miracle there can be no mistake and no deception in this. And when we have set before you one page after another of the Gospel histories, and you have stood wonderingly by Jesus as He stills the tempest with a word, and calls forth Lazarus from his grave—oh, we feel that in the very conclusion of those histories lies a statement which will yet more astonish you, and yet more convince you that Christ was of God; and this is the statement that there were other things which Jesus did, the which, had they been written, the world itself could not have contained the many volumes.

Now, up to this point we have strictly confined ourselves to the fact that the Evangelists, guided by the Spirit of God, omitted much in the histories which they have given us of Christ. But we have paid, as yet, little attention to the remarkable terms which St. John has employed, having spoken generally of omissions, rather than of omis-

sions so extensive that to supply them would be to overload the world. We cannot doubt, as we stated at the outset of our discourse, that the assertion of the world not being able to contain the books that would be written was not intended to be understood in a literal sense. If the assertion be considered as referring to the number of the volumes which Christ's actions would have filled, had every one been registered, then it can only mean that these actions were so numerous that a library, rather than a book, would have been occupied by their record. Taken in this sense, the expression has all along guided our remarks, for we have throughout assumed not only that there are omissions in the histories of Christ, but also that the things written bear the very slightest proportion to the things unwritten. If, however, it would be absurd to suppose St. John speaking of a natural capacity in the world, as though the world would not have been of size enough for the voluminous record, it is very possible that he may refer to a moral capacity; and if such be his reference, it is well worth the closest attention.

We understand by the assertion that the world could not have contained the books—when referred to the moral capacity of the world—that, had all which Christ did been written, the Bible would have been far too large for the united wisdom and intelligence of mankind. We suppose the Evangelist to affirm that it would not have been possible for men, either singly or combined, whatever their diligence of study, to have so mastered the volumes of revelation that they could have been said to have gathered their contents within the mind's grasp. There would have been an amplitude in the opened field of intelligence which must have rendered hopeless the endeavour of making its circuit; so that, had the whole world joined to explore the domain, the whole

world must have failed to overtake its boundaries. And it is thus suggested to us, that there may have been a special wisdom displayed in the size of the Bible, in the adapting the quantity of inspired writing to the capacity of man, and the length of his life. It is indeed principally in regard of the New Testament that the suggestion is made, but there is nothing to prevent our supposing it applicable to the whole volume of Scripture. And we see the greatest reason for believing that the size of the Bible, as well as the majesty of its style, and the sublimity of its disclosures, should be received in evidence of a more than human authorship. As much has been given as the world can contain; and had the quantity of inspired writing been at all commensurate with the material, the world would have been completely overcharged.

This is virtually the statement of our text; and though we cannot pretend so to prove the accuracy of this statement as to show that the Bible is precisely of the length which best suits our condition, there are two or three considerations which go far to establish the opinion that this length is most nicely proportioned to man's power of comprehending truth. It is a wonderful property, but one which we have no hesitation in claiming for the Bible, that it is not too large for the man of least leisure, and yet so large that it cannot be exhausted by a long life of study. There is something very surprising in the fact—but there is no debate that it is a fact—that the Bible is not of a size to alarm any one, be his time ever so occupied, and yet that it is of a size to engage all his time, be that time ever so completely at his disposal. It cannot be said of the Bible —as it must of many human works—that its ponderousness deters men from undertaking its perusal; and yet it may be said that, having entered on its perusal, we never

reach its close. Can you find the individual, however many the years, and however great the diligence which he has given to the study of the sacred volume, who feels that there is no more to be learnt from that volume, and that it is useless for him to re-peruse that volume? And yet, on the other hand, if you wish to guide a man into acquaintance with the things which belong to his peace, and, accordingly, press on him the duty of reading the Bible, you can be met with no plausible excuse from the greatness of the prescribed task: it is not a huge library, it is only a single, and not very large, book which you entreat him to investigate; and with what fairness can a man of the most engrossing occupation plead want of time as his apology for refusing?

We say again that this is one of the most extraordinary things to be observed in regard of the Bible. If the inspired writers had filled—as it appears from our text they might have done—a vast array of volumes, it cannot be doubted that the great mass of men would have argued that the quantity sanctioned the neglect, and that we should have been met, in our every endeavour to fasten them to the duty of searching the Scriptures, with the apparently reasonable statement that the necessary engagements of life forbade the embarking in so gigantic an undertaking. And then, on the other hand, had the Bible not been of so condensed and comprehensive a character that its chapters are libraries and its sentences volumes, the righteous of the earth, having nothing but the single book to study, would have presently been left with nothing to examine, nothing to ponder; a few weeks would have finished a human book of the same size; and what then is it but the Deity in the Bible which makes it, like the bush in Horeb, for ever consuming and yet for ever unconsumed? Oh, these are

two features which strongly mark off the Bible from all other books—we mean, of course, in their combination—that it is so small that, in regard of its study, no one can be afraid of making a beginning; so large, that no one was ever able to make an end. And if we can make these assertions in respect of the Bible in its present size, may we not readily believe that, had the histories of Christ contained all which He did, the world would have been unable to contain the books? The quantity of inspired writings would have been so great that the unconverted amongst men would have held themselves excused from reading any, and the converted must have unavoidably remained ignorant of much. Yes, we may be sure that the world itself could not have held the books. The moral capacity of mankind, for which the present amount of revelation is more than sufficient, would have been vastly overtasked, and those most desirous of acquaintance with God's word must have confined themselves to parts, and never have attempted to gain acquaintance with the whole.

We are most anxious to impress upon you the truth, that the Bible is thus large enough, and yet not too large, for creatures constituted and circumstanced as ourselves. We do not pretend, as we before hinted, to decide that the Bible is of precisely the best length, so that nothing could have been added, and nothing abstracted, without detriment to mankind. Our text does not require us to form such decision; it only suggests—and the suggestion is full of interest and instruction—that, in regard of its size, the Bible was composed with a distinct reference to the human capacity, so that account was taken of what the world could hold, when directions were given as to what should be written and what suppressed. And the beautiful truth which we wish commended to your

attention is, that though men have written commentaries on the Bible, and the press, for century after century, has been pouring forth the labours of learned divines in the shape of treatises, and paraphrases, and sermons, all professedly designed to bring out the treasures of Scripture—the inspired volume still remains, we might almost say, unexplored, and its mines of intelligence solicit as much as ever the searchings of the student. Who amongst us, that is accustomed to read the Bible with diligence and prayer, can be ignorant that the contents of this book seem to grow with the being examined, so that in place of exhausting we multiply by using the material of thought? Passages in which we have observed no particular beauty or force, though they have been a hundred times read, will suddenly strike us as full of the most valuable meaning; and words which we have overlooked as unimportant dilate into sermons, and preach to us of duties and mysteries. There are texts in the Bible which we may have often given up as hopelessly obscure; but with greater experience has come greater light, and the dark sayings have burst forth as amongst the most brilliant and precious in Scripture.

Oh, that were indeed a new character amongst Christians who should feel the want of a larger Bible! There may, undoubtedly, be many points on which the righteous man longs for fuller information, many subjects which he would wish elucidated with yet greater clearness than is derivable from the pages of Holy Writ; but he can never say that there remains nothing more for him to examine in Scripture, that he has gone the whole length that revelation will carry him, and that he is at a stand for want of a larger Bible. A larger Bible! Oh, who is there of us who will dare to say that he has so exhausted a single chapter of the Bible, that he can be

confident there is nothing more of instruction, nothing more of warning, nothing more of comfort, to be drawn from its statements? If we confine ourselves to what is recorded of Christ, who will pretend—in regard, for example, to the Sermon on the Mount—that he has no need, unless for the mere purpose of refreshing his memory, to read again that varied and comprehensive discourse? Who will say of the Sermon on the Mount that he has extracted all the lessons it was designed to convey, and that there is nothing in this homily of his divine Master which is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," of which his previous perusals have not put him into thorough possession?

Ay, and even in regard of the actions of Jesus, who will venture to affirm that there are no marks of power, no traits of tenderness, no breakings forth of Deity, no gushings of humanity, which he has not detected and admired in the registered doings of the Saviour? Are you never struck, in reading the record of one of Christ's miracles which you have often read before, with some circumstance which demonstrates the might, or indicates the sympathy, of the Redeemer, which had hitherto escaped your observation? We cannot, for example, think it without a reason that St. John throws into his account of Christ's feeding five thousand with five barley loaves the remark, "Now there was much grass in the place." It follows the command of Jesus, "Make the men sit down," and seems to indicate that our Lord consulted the convenience of the multitude, and chose to spread His miraculous table where they might recline in comfort, and partake with pleasure of His bounty. And if it be thus true that the Bible is still unexhausted, that, though the world has been diving for many centuries into its treasures, there are yet unex-

plored stores, riches to stimulate the industry, and recompense the toil, of every lover of glorious truth, then it must, on all hands, be admitted that in its size, as well as in every other respect, the Bible is adapted to the capacity of mankind, and that since now, in the old age of this creation, the sacred volume still presents fresh veins of precious ore—like a mine which the more it is worked the more it seems to have to yield—a great addition to this volume would have only overloaded the world. As it is, the world, if we may so express it, will not have finished the Bible when the concerns of human kind are wound up, and time dies in eternity; and therefore, seeing there is already more than enough for the capacities of the world, may it not well be said that, had all which Christ did been written, the world itself could not have held the books?

Now the great practical lesson which we desire to draw from this subject of discourse is one which is applicable to every class of hearers. Whatever your position in life, whatever your occupation, we have to say to you all, we have to ask you all to bear away with you the truth, that there is enough in the Bible for those who have most time at their command, and not too much for those who have least time at their command. There may be those of you whom God has so placed that they are not compelled to wear away their days and nights in providing means of subsistence for themselves and their families, but who are blessed with such a measure of sufficiency, that they have leisure at their disposal for study and inquiry. And what is the lesson which our subject of discourse reads to such as these? Why we press on these men, who are comparatively men of leisure, the duty of searching the Scriptures; of giving themselves, assiduously and prayer-

fully, to the searching of Scripture, assuring them that the more they explore, the more will the mine deepen; and thus will study be recompensed, not only by present discoveries, but by the certainty that there are yet greater to be made. But there are others amongst you who are quite differently circumstanced, who have hardly any time they can call their own; who must "rise early, and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness." And what do we say to these? What lesson do we draw for these from our subject of discourse? Exactly what we said; exactly what we drew in the case of men who had much leisure at their disposal. We press alike upon those who are deeply engaged in business the duty of searching the Scriptures. We will take no apology from the extent of your occupations. Commentators may swell the Bible, but the Bible itself is but a small book; and if only a single chapter were read morning and evening—read with hearty, humble prayer—there would be rapidly acquired a great knowledge of Scripture; and men of business, if not profound theologians, would be well versed in the revelation made by God of Himself. It is a mercy for you that the Bible is not larger. You are thus deprived of a most specious excuse by which you might have striven to justify ignorance. If the Divine writings, like the writings of divines, filled shelf upon shelf, and room upon room, we should have you asking the use of recommending the records of salvation to men who had but a few minutes every day which they could employ upon reading. But the minutes will suffice. Revelation has been gathered within so manageable a compass that no press of necessary occupation can incapacitate for gaining acquaintance with its statements. Revelation might have been so enlarged that its extent might perhaps

have been pleaded at the Judgment in extenuation of neglect. And, if not at the Judgment, it might certainly have been used, during life, for quieting conscience when it pleaded the great duty of searching the Scriptures. But as it is, the Bible being, after all, but a small book—small, as we have endeavoured to show you, not from lack of material for making it larger, but because the Divine Author saw that, if larger, it would be too large for human comprehension—this, we say, being the size of the Bible, why, if you refuse to acquaint yourselves with its contents, which are able to "make you wise unto salvation," it will rise hereafter, like a cloud from the sea before the prophet's servant, no larger in size than a man's hand—the very diminutiveness ominous of ruin; and presently the whole firmament of the future shall be overcast with blackness; the rain shall descend, the floods shall come, and yourselves be borne away by the torrent of indignation. Once more, then, and finally, we say, "Search the Scriptures:" search them with prayer, and you shall certainly search them with profit.

SERMON V

THE MADMAN IN SPORT

"As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?"—PROVERBS xxvi. 18, 19.

IT is curious to consider how many persons, notwithstanding the aboundings of sickness and death, know them only by report, having never been personally in contact with these great consequences of sin. It is not unlikely that there are numbers amongst you who have never seen a dead body; and many more with whom the sight has been singularly rare, occurring only at far intervals, when they have been called to endure great domestic bereavements. Indeed, unless a man's profession bring him, so to speak, into companionship with death, he may live many years, with a thousand falling at his side, and ten thousand at his right hand, and yet know nothing, but by rumour, of the stillness, the coldness, the ghastliness of death. He may have, practically, no acquaintance with the fixed, pale lineaments of a corpse; and if the coffin were placed before him, which had just received its motionless tenant, he might experience something of that strange thrill and sickness which may be called nature's involuntary confession of the fearfulness of the original curse. Hence it would, we suppose, be greatly for the advantage of numbers if, without exposing

them to the danger of growing too familiar with death, we could make them so far acquainted with what it is to die, as to leave them without excuse if they persisted in deferring to give heed to the saving of the soul. There are many, especially amongst the young, for whom, we think, it would be a most excellent thing if they could occasionally accompany the physician or the clergyman in his rounds, and be introduced to one sufferer after another, presenting all varieties and all stages of disease. An occasional walk through the wards of a hospital would be instrumental, we believe, to the leading numbers of you into the narrow path of life; for, whether the patient manifested the wildness of fever, or the exhaustion of consumption, or the anguish of some deep-seated pain, the same lesson would be impressively delivered—the lesson that, whilst "the earthly house of this tabernacle" is being "taken down," there is the least possible ability of labouring after an entrance into the heavenly inheritance.

But suppose that, in place of conducting you through a hospital for the sick, we were to take you round an asylum for the mad. There is no disease which can, for a moment, be compared with that which, having in some sense its seat in the brain, quenches or dims the light of reason, so that man is brought down towards the level of the brute. It is commonly felt, and said, that death itself is preferable to madness; and were it not that the lunatic may possibly recover, and so be restored to society and friendship, no one perhaps could dissent from the decision, that it would be easier to lay one we loved in the grave, than to see in him the wild eye, and to hear from him the wild chatter of a maniac. Accordingly, there is nothing from which we seem more instinctively to shrink than from madness, though it be only one of those many fell

maladies to which flesh is heir. We can scarcely be said to have sympathy with the insane, as we have with the sick, however assured we may be as to madness being nothing but one description of sickness. It does not come home to us, in any the like manner, that we are exposed to the same malady, or in danger of being similarly visited. The mind will instantly admit the probability that the body may have to suffer from the diseases which the hospital presents; but it seems to know nothing whatever of a probability that itself may be out of joint—this enters not, to all appearance, into the list of its contingencies; as though the soul, with her innate feeling of deathlessness, shrank from even the suspension of her faculties, as from an image of annihilation which it would be treason to herself to contemplate as possible.

It is this, as we think, which gives the madhouse its fearfulness to all who visit it for the purposes of a passing inspection — there is a sort of unearthliness about the scene: it is not man who is looked upon; for reason is felt to be indispensable to the constitution of man; it is a strange, mysterious, inexplicable being, who seems to have assumed the human form that he may appal us in our own likeness, and to have come from some dark place of penal retribution, on an errand of scorn and revenge. And we should like to take you, when such recollections were in their strength, and address you on our present subject of discourse. If we were about to handle a passage of Scripture which spake of moral sickness and death, likening men, in an unconverted state, to those who are worn down by disease, or bound up for burial, we might wish to take you, as you issue from the hospital, with your minds full of emaciated forms, and all the helplessness of dissolution. It might well be supposed that you would be ready to

listen with attention to descriptions which transferred to yourselves all the images which were crowding your recollections; and we might hope that, being painfully affected by what you had just seen, you would not be indifferent as a similar, though far worse, condition were proved to be spiritually your own. And, upon the same principle, we want you to have all your horror at madness in exercise, as we discourse to you on a description which may perhaps find its parallel amongst yourselves—for it is a madman of whom we are in search; a madman who has broken away from every keeper, and is ranging to and fro, scattering on all sides woe and calamity. Yes, it should be under the impression of all which a Bedlam can do to make you cower and shrink, that you join us in inquiring whether there may not be some amongst yourselves who may be likened, in the language of our text, to a "madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death."

Now it would not be easy to describe anything more formidable than is delineated under such an image as this. If it were asked who had sat for such a portrait, we should be disposed to look out for some monster, some scourge of our race, in whom vast powers had been at the disposal of ungoverned passions, and who had covered a country with weeping and desolate families. And, at first, we may readily be tempted to conclude that Solomon has employed somewhat exaggerated terms, when we find who it is whom the madman represents. The man who is brought before us as answering to a description so full of what is terrible, is no murderer, no furious and desperate tyrant, dealing in wholesale carnage, and laying waste provinces. On the contrary, he is a man to be met with in everyday life, one who perhaps scarcely means any harm, and who even passes in society for an agreeable

and innocent person. This madman, "who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death," and from whom, therefore, you might expect that every one who met him would turn away aghast, is simply the man "that deceiveth his neighbour, and saith, Am not I in sport?" You can hardly consider attentively the form of expression, and not see that it is not merely, nor even mainly, because a man "deceiveth his neighbour" that he is likened to a maniac; but because he deceiveth him, and then saith, "Am not I in sport?"

Here it is, in the attempt to vindicate the accuracy of such a representation, that we shall find matter, as we believe, for important discourse. We are very anxious to place under its just point of view that deceit which may only originate in jest, but which, nevertheless, may issue in death. But, first, we would point out to you how completely the conflict, of which this creation is the scene, and the leading antagonists in which are none other than Satan and God, is a conflict between falsehood and truth. The entrance of evil was effected through a lie; and when Christ promised the descent of the Holy Ghost, whose special office it was to be to regenerate human kind, to restore their lost purity, and, therewith, their lost happiness, He promised it under the character of the "Spirit of truth," as though truth alone were needed to the making the earth once more Paradise. And it is in accordance with this representation of that great struggle, which fixes the regards of higher orders of intelligence, as being a struggle between falsehood and truth, that so much criminality is everywhere in Scripture attached to a lie, and that those on whom lying may be charged are represented as thereby more specially obnoxious to the anger of God. "A lying tongue," saith the wise man, "is but for a

moment;" as though sudden vengeance might be expected to descend on the liar, and sweep him away ere he could reiterate his falsehood. And if there thus be, as it were, a kind of awful majesty in truth, so that the swerving from it is emphatically treason against God and the soul, it follows that whatever is calculated to diminish reverence for truth, or to palliate falsehood, is likely to work as wide mischief as can well be imagined.

You are all ready, without hesitation, to admit that nothing would go farther towards lowering the bands of society than the destroying the shame which now attaches to a lie; and, accordingly, you would rise up, as by one common impulse, to withstand any man, or any theory, which should propose to shield the liar, or to make his offence comparatively unimportant. There must be no endeavour to do away with that contempt which is the portion of every one detected in a falsehood—for it is a safeguard, as you all feel, against an almost universal suspicion and distrust, which must overspread and darken a world in which truth was a stranger. But whilst the bold and direct falsehood thus gains for itself a genuine execration—mainly, perhaps, because felt to militate against the general interest—there is a ready indulgence for the more sportive falsehood, which is rather the playing with truth than the making a lie. You know how much will be pardoned to an erroneous statement for the sake of its wit; and how the reciter of an amusing tale—though perhaps altogether a fiction of his own; or, if founded on a truth, yet exaggerated in all its parts to make it more effective—will be applauded by the company who constitute his audience, though, all the while, they may be suspicious, if not absolutely certain, that he is not adhering to facts. And when backed by so strong a saying as that of our text

—a saying, of which it can hardly be doubted that it includes the case now under consideration—we need not hesitate to regard as fearfully mischievous that tampering with truth for which the wit of the speaker is commonly received as more than an excuse.

There is many a young mind which loses its horror of a falsehood through observing what applause follows a clever exaggeration or misrepresentation. And many a child, it may be, however well-schooled, on set occasions, in the duty of invariably speaking the truth, marks shrewdly how a parent or instructor indulges in fiction when he seeks to be amusing, and places it against his solemnity when he strives to be impressive. They who would recommend truth need to be truthful as well when narrating the events of a morning walk as when giving the story of Creation, or enlarging on the nature of God. They must no more use falsehood to make a tale more amusing, than to increase their estate, or amplify their power. In entertaining a table, and causing lightheartedness and gaiety to go the round of a company, they may be teaching many to view with less abhorrence a lie, or diminishing in them that sense of the sanctity of truth, which is, at once, an admirable virtue, and essential to the existence of every other. I do not fear the influence of one whom the world denounces as a liar, but I do of one whom it applauds as a wit. I fear it in regard of reverence for truth, a reverence which, if it do not of itself make a great character, must be strong wheresoever the character is great. And thus much we may certainly urge, that whosoever helps to make others less truthful, works a mischief whose extent you could scarcely exaggerate.

It is not the tyrant who should come upon a land with fire and sword that would effect a fearful injury, if you

compare him with the man who should make falsehood universal. Imagine a land without truth, trace the features which this general outline includes—universal distrust, universal dislocation of the bands of society—and you have as wild a chaos as fancy ever drew, as vast a desolation, as terrible a darkness. Indeed, a world without truth is a world without Christ, seeing that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And though there seem no proportion between such a state as a result, and a sportive exaggeration as a cause, nevertheless, if there be that tendency, which we have traced, in the sportive exaggeration as a cause, to the diminishing the reverence for truth, its author is to be regarded as doing his part towards bringing round the condition which would, confessedly, be so stern. If the pleasant falsehood, uttered but in joke, make falsehood less hateful to those who sit round, he who delivers it may justly be charged as instrumental to spreading the misery to which lying would be parent. And it is therefore but a just representation which Solomon furnishes in our text, even if you apply it to what the world reckons venial, or, rather, to what it covers with approval. The man who passes off a clever fiction, or amusingly distorts an occurrence, or ludicrously misrepresents a fact, may undoubtedly say, when charged with deceiving his neighbour, "Am not I in sport?" But, nevertheless, forasmuch as it can hardly fail but that he will lessen the majesty of truth in the eyes of his neighbour, he may be likened to "a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death."

But we do not think that we have yet given you the worst case of sportive deceit, nor that which was, perhaps, more specially intended by Solomon, when inditing our text. It is not till the deceit is employed upon

sacred things that we have before us the maniac in all his wildness and injuriousness. There are different ways in which infidelity may be propagated, or men's belief in revelation weakened and undermined. There is such a thing as the open apostle of infidelity, though, if we knew not the fact, we might have questioned the possibility. But there are other ways of propagating infidelity, besides that of open apostleship. There is many an individual who, without distinctly intending to attack revealed religion—for, if questioned, he would declare himself a believer therein—is instrumental, by jocular conversation upon sacred things, by witticisms and pleasantries in regard of divine truths, to the making men think lightly of the Bible, and so to the preparing them to despise its authority. The man who, in any way, exercises his wit upon the Bible, conveys, undoubtedly, the impression, whether he intend it or not, that he is not a believer in the inspiration of the Bible; for it is altogether impossible that a man who really recognized in the Bible the word of the living God, and who felt that its pages had been traced by the very hand which spread out the firmament, should select from it passages to parody, or expressions which might be thrown into ludicrous forms. And he, therefore, who does this must certainly be spoken of as deceiving his neighbour. He deceives him with regard to his own belief, if he be not a sceptic; and he deceives him by conveying an insinuation against Christianity, and thus impressing upon him the worst of all falsehoods.

I know that, if he be charged with deceiving his neighbour, he will have his answer at hand, "Am not I in sport?" He never meant, he will tell you, when he introduced Scripture ridiculously, or amused his companions by his sarcastic allusions to the peculiarities of the

righteous, to recommend a contempt for religion, or to insinuate a disbelief in the Bible; and perhaps he never did. There is no reason to suppose that the man who is likened in our text to the maniac, spake falsely when he urged that he had been only "in sport." But the maniac means no harm: he is not conscious of doing any harm, though he is throwing firebrands and arrows on the right hand and on the left. And, in like manner, even if you acquit him of harmful intent, and suppose him really unconscious that he is working moral injury, he who jokes with sacred things, or points his wit with Scriptural allusions, may do more mischief to the souls of his fellow-men than if he engaged openly in assault on the great truths of Christianity.

It is extraordinary what power there is, in some ludicrous exhibition of sacred things, to destroy the solemnity with which those things should be regarded and approached. If you have heard a text quoted in a ridiculous manner, or applied to some laughable occurrence, you will hardly ever be able to separate the text from that sense, or that occurrence. The association will be permanent; and when you hear the text again, though it may be in the house of God, or under circumstances which make you wish for the most thorough concentration of thought on awful things, yet will there come back upon you all the joke, and all the parody, so that the mind will be dissipated, and the very sanctuary profaned. The memory, which is but a sieve, if you pour in texts of Scripture in their pure and solemn import, becomes as a chest, if you only give those texts a laughable turn. Hence the justice of representing the sportive deceiver by so fearful a figure as that in our text. He may only mean to amuse the company, and he meditates no attack upon religion. But he suffers himself to become

profane in labouring to be witty—or, perhaps (for this is very common), he mistakes profaneness for wit, and supposes that he is clever, because he is reckless. He cannot withstand the temptation of making a ridiculous allusion to Scripture, or of taking off, as it is termed, the manners and habits of the devout. And he has his reward—a peal of laughter, which is raised by his absurd application of a text, or by his keen caricature and burlesque, abundantly repays him if he has had any scruples, and encourages him to have fewer for the future. But he may have wrought incalculable mischief. He may have deceived others into a persuasion that the Bible does not deserve all their reverence, and that a profession of religion is the same as hypocrisy. He may have conveyed the impression that the Bible may fairly be used as a jest-book, and that he who would not be ridiculous must not be religious.

And could he have done worse? Could he, if he had armed himself with eloquence and learning, and set himself to give laboured and ingenious reasons for repudiating Scripture, and living without a thought of the moral Governor of the Universe—could he have done anything more likely to bring his hearers to think scornfully of revelation, and slightingly of godliness? In the one case indeed he could not have been "in sport," and he may have been in the other. But what of that? I dread not the solemn argument half so much as the satirical allusion. The mind braces itself against the former, but opens all its avenues, without any fear, to the latter. "In sport," indeed? If there could be any excuse in this for the rashness of the speaker, there is no diminution to the risk of the hearer. And what excuse is it for the speaker? As well tell me of the sportiveness of the

man who carries a lighted torch into a magazine of gunpowder. No, no—it is at best the sportiveness of the idiot, and may produce the same mischief as the fury of the maniac. And if ever you hear an attempt to amuse a company by sarcasms on the religious, or by the ridiculous use of Scriptural expressions, let it seem nothing to you that the deceit is but pleasantry, and that the speaker has no set design of cheating men into infidelity: remember only the power of satire, the might of a laugh, the momentum of a jest; and then, as you think how many the fascinating companion may seduce into irreverence, and encourage in impiety, you will feel that you do him no injustice in likening him, with Solomon, to "a madman that casteth firebrands, arrows, and death."

Now the upshot of the whole matter, or the great general inference to be drawn from our subject of discourse, is that we ought to set a watch on our tongues, and to pray God to "keep the door of our lips." It is very strongly, but quite as truly, said by Solomon, in another of his proverbs, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue." For of all gifts with which we have been entrusted, the gift of speech is perhaps that with which we may work most of evil or good; and, nevertheless, it is also that of whose right exercise we perhaps make least account. It appears to us a hard saying that, "for every idle word which they speak," men shall give account at the last; and we scarcely discern any proportion between a few syllables uttered without thought and those retributive judgments which must be looked for hereafter. But if you observe how we have vindicated the correctness of the representation of our text, even though it be only the idle talker who is likened to the uncontrolled maniac, you will see that a word may be no insignificant

thing; that its consequences may be widely disastrous; and certainly the speaker is answerable for consequences which may possibly ensue, however God may prevent their actual occurrence. The fiction may not make a liar, and the jest may not make an infidel; but since it is the tendency of the fiction to make liars, and of the jest to make infidels, he who invents the one or utters the other is as criminal as though the result had been the same as the tendency.

There is, perhaps, nothing over which Christianity has so little influence as over the ordinary conversation of Christians. They who, in the main, give heed to other precepts, seem quite to forget this of the Apostle, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt." The Apostle does not mean the salt of wit, which may make speech sparkling, but, rather, the salt of religion, which will make speech wholesome. Not that conversation is to be always on religious topics: but, whilst we admit within our social circle whatever is instructive, yea, whatever is entertaining without being contaminating, we should exclude the malicious slander, the idle jest, and the unprofitable badinage, which, if they serve to kill time, may show themselves double-edged, and kill the soul at the same stroke; and if anything can make us henceforward watchful over our tongues, and desirous to use what David calls "the best member which we have" to the glory of God and the good of our fellow-men, it will be the representation which we have had under review—and which identifies with the maniac, scattering destruction on all sides—the jocular talker, in whose jokes is deceit.

We wished, at the outset of our discourse, that we could take you when fresh from a visit to a madhouse, in order that, whilst the terrors of lunacy were yet

haunting your minds, you might search with us for a madman who was said to be at large amongst ourselves. We have found him; but our fear now is, that because the firebrands may be blazing with wit, and the arrows be feathered by genius, you will not shrink from the destroyer, or will not believe that he can indeed scatter death; and therefore must we impress upon you, in conclusion, that the wandering maniac would be only, but vastly, more formidable, if there were fascination in place of terror in his look, so that he could keep you enchanted whilst he applied the firebrand to your dwelling, or directed the arrow to your heart. It is not the speech which shocks modesty that is likely to encourage licentiousness, but that which is just refined enough not to cause a blush. It is not the coarse sneer which will frighten the young from piety; but the polished satire will make them ashamed of being religious. The coarse assault would put them on their guard; but the dexterous insinuation will conquer by disarming. Then be ye careful that ye never, whether in others or yourselves, let cleverness apologize for levity, wit screen profaneness, nor ingenuity recommend falsehood. Speak as those who know that an ill-disciplined tongue is a deadly sword, and listen as those who fear that the ear may be its scabbard. For be ye well assured that when the final inquiry shall go on as to the causes and agencies through which souls have been destroyed, it will not be the blasphemer whose tongue was laden with oaths, nor the profligate whose speech was all ribaldry, nor the infidel who scurrilized religion, that will necessarily be fixed on as having done the most mischief. The elegant and amusing talker, the accomplished trifler with truth, the polished jester, who, if he "deceived his neighbour," could always urge that he

deceived him only "in sport"—this may be the man who is summoned to stand forth, and charged, before an assembled and approving universe, with having resembled "the madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death."

SERMON VI

PEACE, PEACE, WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE

"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."—JER. vi. 14.

HOW mischievous is that false kindness which is afraid of telling us honestly the state of the case if it happen to be dangerous or desperate! The Jews were now in a condition of great peril, threatened with captivity and exile on account of their frequent rebellions; but they could not tolerate the faithful counsellors who told them of their vices and warned them of their danger. The only way to their favour, and, consequently, to power and emolument, was to flatter them with the assurance that no calamity was at hand, and that there was no pressing need for repentance. And though the armies of the king of Babylon were almost thundering at their gates, they were so bent on being deceived, that they treated with contempt the Prophets of the Lord, and bestowed all their attention and applause on those who were ready to promise them security. Thus having made it the interest of false teachers to soothe and deceive, they were speedily addressed by plausible and flattering men; for so soon as the popular determination is sufficiently marked, there will always be numbers to court, in the indicated way, the popular favour. Given up at last

to their own delusions and devices, they did but strengthen themselves in the persuasion of a freedom from trouble, as that trouble gathered and closed in upon them; and it was not till their city was sacked, and the strength and the glory of their kingdom were borne to a strange land, that they awoke to the consciousness that the worst wound of all is a wound slightly healed, and the worst enemy one who prophesies of peace when, if God's word be true, there is no peace whatever.

Now we wish you to be aware of the fact that, in regard of their eternal concerns, men have a willingness, and even a desire, to be deceived, though, in regard of their temporal, they are keenly alive to attempts at imposition, and eager to resent them. They commonly prefer the moral physician who will make light of their disease, and not startle them by faithfully exposing their danger; though, were they similarly beguiled and betrayed by one whom they had consulted on a bodily malady, they would denounce him as guilty of most hateful perfidy. And it may be for your profit that we look into some of the more ordinary cases in which "the hurt of the daughter of God's people" may be "slightly healed," and peace spoken of when there is no peace. And first we would remind you that, if there be truth in the statements of Scripture, there is a distinction the very strongest between the people of the world and the people of God. If you will take the Bible as sufficient authority, no two communities can be more broadly separated, actuated by motives more widely different, or engaged in pursuing objects which have less of alliance. When it is expressly affirmed that, "if any man be in Christ he is a new creature," "old things have passed away, and all things become new"—when it is declared that "the friendship of the world is

enmity with God," and that, consequently, "if any man will be a friend of the world, he is the enemy of God"—you must allow that language could not more strongly express difference in character and deportment, nor more clearly mark that anything like amalgamation is made impossible by the nature of the case.

Yet here is the respect in which the danger is perhaps greatest of the moral hurt being only slightly healed, and peace prophesied when there is no peace. It is just here that the teacher is most tempted to slur over truth, because just here it is that truth is most distasteful to all classes of hearers. The worldly-minded are well pleased to have the differences between themselves and the religious made as few and unimportant as possible, inasmuch as they are thus soothed into a persuasion that, after all, they are in no great danger of God's wrath. On the other hand, those who profess a concern for the soul are often still so much inclined to the pursuits and pleasures of earth, that they have a ready ear for any doctrine which seems to offer them the joys of the next life without requiring continued self-denial in this. Thus it is an unpopular thing, opposed to the inclination of the majority of hearers, to insist on the breadth of separation between the worldly and the religious; to represent, without equivocation or disguise, that the attempting to serve two masters is the certain serving of only one, and that the master whose "wages is death." But if we would be faithful in the ministry, this is what we must do. To do otherwise would be to play with your souls, to lead you into a delusion which, if continued, must leave you shipwrecked for eternity. There is no escaping, except through dishonesty and subterfuge, the repeated and explicit statements of Scripture as to the character of that moral change of

which converted men are the subjects. It is not a change which simply produces abstinence from certain forms of wickedness, and attention to certain outward duties; it is a change of the heart, such a renewing of the affections, that men no longer delight in what before gave them pleasure, and no longer pursue what before seemed their chief good.

Therefore it is a change which cannot have been experienced if the man be as solicitous as ever to amass wealth, as eager as ever in schemes of self-aggrandizement, as indulgent as ever to evil passions and tempers. But to insist on this doctrine is to probe a great mass of professing Christians to the quick, for they would fain believe that the soul may be saved, without that abandonment of the world, that deep consecration of powers and affections to the Almighty, which are required by what they count a too rigid theology. But it were a base betrayal of the trust committed us by God to represent it as possible that the heart may be given to the Creator, whilst time and thought and toil and talent are engrossed by the creature. To speak favourably of a religion which finds a worldly atmosphere congenial, what were this but to praise the purity which is at home with pollution, or the life which breathes freest in the sepulchre? Therefore do we know and feel that, were we to say anything to encourage the opinion that men may be safe in being either fashionably religious, or religiously fashionable—in being, that is, either just so religious as not to offend the world, or just so worldly as not to put contempt on religion—we should only be bringing on ourselves the condemnation, and on you the consequences, of that treacherous dealing which is denounced in our text—we should be healing the hurt of the daughter of

God's people slightly; we should be saying, "Peace, peace, when there was no peace."

Take another case—the case of those in whom has been produced conviction of sin; whose consciences, after long slumber, have been roused to do their office, and have done it with great energy. It is no uncommon thing for conviction of sin not to be followed by conversion: hundreds, who have been stirred for a time to a sense of guilt and danger, in place of advancing to genuine penitence, lapse back into their former indifference. Ah, this is amongst the most affecting of moral phenomena! the signs and earnests, as we thought them, of life give a melancholy and mysterious interest to death. Let the ministers of religion take heed that they be not accessory to so disappointing an occurrence. And they easily may be. The spiritual physician may be too hasty in applying to the wounded conscience the balm of the Gospel, and thus may arrest that process of godly contrition which seemed so hopefully begun. He may pour in the consolations of Christianity, and administer cordials provided for the broken in heart, before there has been acquired that deep feeling of the need of a Mediator, which can only result from an abiding, engrossing consciousness of helplessness and guilt.

It should ever be remembered that, though the Gospel has so taken the place of the law that we are no longer under the latter as a covenant, the law has not ceased to be an engine for rousing the conscience, as well as a rule for regulating the life. The terrors of the law prepare the way for the mercies of the Gospel; and it is the man who has been scared by the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai who is ready to receive those breathings of love which flow forth from Zion. And we cannot doubt that, when the terrors of

the law are just beginning to do their part, producing the sense of exposure to God's wrath, and of utter inability to avert it, it is very possible that the mercies of the Gospel may be prematurely introduced by the spiritual counsellor. It is no time to speak of free forgiveness, till the man exclaims, in the agony of alarm, almost of despair, "What must I do to be saved?" Then display the cross. Then expatiate on the glorious truth, that "the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." Then point to the unsearchable riches of Christ; and meet every doubt, oppose every objection, combat every fear, by exhibiting the mighty fact of an atonement for sin. You cannot now be building up when you ought to be casting down; for the self-abasement is your evidence that the time is come at which, according to St. Paul, you should comfort the individual, "lest perhaps he be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow."

But the case suggested by our text is that of a too hasty appropriation of the consolations of Christianity; and this case, we cannot doubt, is of frequent occurrence. Not, indeed, that whenever conviction of sin is not followed by conversion, the cause is to be found in the premature use of the mercies of the Gospel. We know too well that, in many instances, the conscience, which had been mysteriously aroused, is as mysteriously quieted; so that, without assignable reason, men who had manifested anxiety as to their souls, and apparently been earnest in seeking salvation, are soon again found amongst the careless and indifferent, as busy as ever with chasing shadows, as pleased as ever with "things that perish in the using." For a moment they have seemed conscious of their immortality, and have risen to the dignity of deathless beings; and then the pulse has ceased to beat—they have again been

creatures of a day, in place of heirs of eternity. Still, if there be many instances in which we may not fairly ascribe, to a too hasty appropriation of the mercies of the Gospel, the frustration of what appeared hopefully commenced, we may justly say that such an appropriation would be likely to produce so disappointing a result, and that the probability is that it very frequently does. Oh! is it only a possible thing?—is it not rather, we may believe, what is often occurring—that men suppose themselves pardoned before they have felt themselves lost; and that thus, applying to their own cases the promises of the word, ere they have learnt the desperate nature of the evil which solicits a remedy, they are brought into a worse insensibility than that from which they emerged—the insensibility of a false hope, of the persuasion of safety with the ignorance of danger?

Indeed we do feel that, were one of you to come to us labouring under spiritual distress, and seeking spiritual counsel, it would be fearfully easy to mistake his case; to address him with words of comfort, when we ought to be acting on his fears. In our eagerness to cheer a disquieted man, and to magnify the Redeemer, we might encourage him at once to take as his own the pardon proffered to the penitent, though he may not yet have been brought to the thorough repentance which is the condition on which the pardon is bestowed. And we should hereby do him incalculable injury. We should be quieting anxieties, roused for the most salutary purposes, and dissipating terrors which were working the downfall of pride. He may go from us with a mind more at ease, because informed, from the scheme of Redemption, that no amount of guilt presents insurmountable obstacles to the extension of pardon. But then he may also go from us, less disposed than he was to

search "the plague of his own heart," with diminished apprehensions of the dreadfulness of God's wrath, because no longer regarding himself as exposed to its outbreak. He may not be the distressed being that he was. But in the sudden getting quit of his distress, he may have also got quit of much of that sense of the evil of sin which was gradually gaining firm possession of his soul; and thus, through the ceasing to feel himself in peril, he may be less tremblingly alive to the being in fault. And if we were to be thus instrumental to the extricating a man, at too early a period, from the goadings and threatenings of an agitated conscience, so that he took to himself the privileges of Christianity, ere his felt destitution had taught him their worth—oh, we cannot but fear that we should be also instrumental to the arresting, if not destroying, in his heart a renovating work; that we should produce in him a merely superficial religion, the malignity of his disease having never been discovered, the greatness of his necessities never ascertained, the moral wound never probed to the quick!—and thus should we but furnish a fresh proof how easy, and at the same time how fatal it is to heal the hurt of the daughter of God's people slightly, and to say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

We have further to remark, that the peculiar doctrines of Christianity are strongly offensive to the great body of men, and that on, this account chiefly it is that there is so much reluctance to the bringing them forward, and so much readiness to explain them away. We must allow that, by taking the merit of our salvation altogether from ourselves, making us wholly without power either to will or to do a good thing, and requiring of us that we depend for justification unreservedly upon one who died the death

of a malefactor, the Christian theology arms against itself many of the strongest of our natural feelings; for it assumes facts which we are disposed to contradict, and demands a submission which we are not willing to yield. You cannot fail to be aware that "the offence of the cross has not ceased." You must be sufficiently aware that, although these are not days when men are called to join "the noble army of martyrs," there is an opposition to the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel—an opposition which gives as much cause now, as there was in earlier days, for the Saviour to exclaim, "Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." So that here is a precise case in which the known feelings of the generality of men place the teacher under a temptation of keeping back truth, or of stating it so equivocally that its full force shall not be felt. He cannot be ignorant that, if he set forth, without reserve or disguise, the corruption and helplessness of man, insist on the perfect gratuitousness of salvation, and refer to God's free and distinguishing grace as first exciting the desire for deliverance, and then enabling to lay hold on the provided succours, he will have to encounter the antipathies of, perhaps, a majority of his hearers; and he is, consequently and naturally, moved to the concealing much, and the softening down more. And if he yield to the temptation, then we have that mixed and diluted theology which does not indeed exclude Christ, but assigns much to man; which, without denying the meritorious obedience and sufferings of the Mediator, soothes our pride with an assurance that, by our good works, we contribute something towards the attainment of everlasting happiness. We have nothing like a bold and full exhibition of Christ in His various offices, as "made unto us, of God, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and

Redemption." But, in the stead of this, we have the Saviour introduced just to make up the deficiencies—not as "all in all" to a lost world, but as furnishing a groundwork on which we may build for ourselves.

And if such be the theology with which the teacher is induced to gratify his hearers, what result may we expect to see effected? Why, we maintain that, by encouraging the opinion that men are not "very far gone from original righteousness;" that, notwithstanding the fall, they retain a moral power of doing what shall be acceptable to God; and that their salvation is to result from the combination of their own efforts and the merits of Christ—we maintain that, by encouraging such opinions as these, the teacher flatters his hearers with the most pernicious of all flattery, hiding from them their actual condition, and instructing them how to miss, at the same time that they think they are securing, deliverance. He may be said rather to hide the wound than to make any effort to heal it, and, by administering a kind of anodyne, which prevents present suffering, to consign at once to an easy death and a wretched eternity. If men be not driven from every form and degree of self-righteousness; if they be not content to bow before the supremacy and sufficiency of the atonement; if they harbour the persuasion that they are, in any way, to share with Christ the honour of their deliverance—then the utmost which can be said of the theological system which they adopt and admire is, that it may be adapted for the giving present ease, but leaves unaverted the threatenings of future punishment. And if this be no exaggerated statement—and the whole Bible is our witness that it is not exaggerated—then may we confidently declare that the Prophet and the Priest, amongst the Jews, were not more chargeable with beguiling the people to their ruin—

with accommodating their discourse to the national feeling, and thereby accelerating and aggravating the national disaster—than would be teachers who should exhibit a defective and garbled Christianity; and that upon the one, as well as upon the other, must be fastened the crime alleged by God in our text, "They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

Now it might be difficult to multiply these illustrations, showing you how, in other instances, the very thing may still be done which God here denounces by his servant Jeremiah. But probably enough has been advanced to certify you not only of the possible occurrence, but of the grievous peril which must lie in the substituting, in religion, what is superficial for what ought to be radical. It is this on which we are most anxious to fix your attention. We want to have you satisfied that there can be no falser kindness than that which would hide from men their real condition; and that it is the very extreme of danger when those who are tottering believe themselves secure. We have spoken to you of teachers as healing the hurt slightly, and we have shown you in how great peril they hereby place their patients. But, alas! alas! the patients themselves wish to be thus treated. As God elsewhere says, "My people love to have it so." It is not thus in earthly things. The man who is threatened with bankruptcy does not desire to be misinformed as to the state of his affairs; the friend whom he consults may feel a natural reluctance to communicate unpleasant intelligence, but he himself would wish to be told the worst, since otherwise he cannot take the steps which the emergence may demand. Scared by the bright eye and the hectic cheek

of a darling child, the parents hasten to the physician: they would much rather be told at once of the danger than soothed into the belief that their fears were quite groundless. In the one case they might possibly, through God's blessing or means, avert the early death: in the other, they are left to indulge hope till there is place only for despair. Yes, but it is not thus in spiritual things. In the matters of eternity men have a sort of willingness to be deceived—all their preference is for the teacher who will best help in allaying those apprehensions of the future which will occasionally rise in the midst of dissipation and worldly-mindedness. Nay, they do not wait for the teacher to prophesy to them smooth things, they prophesy them to themselves.

We should like to know, in regard of those amongst you who are still living a life of indifference and worldliness, whether they have not been guilty of disguising from themselves the real facts of their case; whether, at various times, when conscience has been disturbed, they have not been active in inventing something specious with which to still the remonstrance, industrious in saying peace, peace, rather than in seeking reconciliation with God. They have shrunk from knowing their disease. They have wished to hide it. They have been afraid to look upon the wound, lest they should discover what might demand from them a rigid course of abstinence, the amputation of a right hand, the excision of a right eye; or force them, if we may so speak, to change the air, and forsake the scenes which they most liked to frequent. And, therefore, have they eagerly seized on any nostrum, rather than submit to a painful, but necessary, process; and have never considered the utter madness of preferring insensibility to health, and the certain ruin that must

follow on the tampering with sickness of the soul. It needs no small courage—we ought rather to say, it needs no small grace—to be willing to know the worst. Not to be afraid of finding out how bad we are—how corrupt, how capable of the worst actions, if left to ourselves—this is a great point gained in spiritual things. It is a great point gained to be able to pray with David, "Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me." We call it a great point gained to be willing to know the worst, for so long as we stop short of this, we shall be always trying half measures, healing the hurt slightly, and, therefore, never reaching the root of the disease. We counsel you, then, to be honest with yourselves, honest in observing the symptoms of spiritual sickness, honest in applying the remedies prescribed by the Bible.

For our own part, we will not, God helping, be accessory to any amongst you deceiving themselves. If there be a covetous man amongst you, God forbid we should say, peace, peace. We know there is no peace: the covetous man, saith the Apostle, is an idolater; and an idolater must be yet far from the kingdom of Heaven. If there be a sensual man amongst you, the slave of his appetites, we will not say, peace, peace. We know that there is no peace. We remember the emphatic words of Scripture, "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of God;" we remember that "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." If there be a self-righteous person amongst you, or one that is halting between two opinions, or a worshipper of his own reason, or a procrastinator who is putting off the season of repentance, we will not say, peace, peace: we know there is no

peace: how should there be?. "To the law and to the testimony" be our appeal; and we are told that they who would be wise must become as fools; that they who are not with Christ are against Him; and that "now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation."

But if there are those amongst you as to whom we must take good heed that we say not peace, peace, we trust there are some, yea, many, of a wholly different stamp. These are they—may God increase the number—who have come "weary and heavy laden" to the cross of Christ, who have sorrowed with a godly sorrow for sin, and who now believe with a living, active faith in that Redeemer who was "delivered for our offences, and raised again for their justification." To such we will indeed say, peace, peace; for to such there is peace. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Peace I leave with you," was Christ's parting legacy; "my peace I give unto you." "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us thy peace." True Christians have only to depend on the promises of the Gospel, and to plead them in prayer, and (may this be the experience of you all) in all time of their tribulation, and in all time of their wealth, in the hour of death and in the day of judgment, they will be kept by that "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

SERMON VII

A VERY LOVELY SONG

"And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not."—EZEKIEL xxxiii. 32.

THERE is something so striking in the circumstances of the well-known narrative of Felix and Paul, that we are apt to overlook, in comparison, similar and not less instructive accounts. St. Paul was a prisoner, and Felix was the Roman Governor, at whose disposal he absolutely lay; and every one looks with admiration on the intrepid Apostle, as, disregarding the perilous position in which he stood, he declaimed against the very vices by which Felix was enslaved, and denounced Divine vengeance against the intemperate and unrighteous. When, moreover, as the effect of his lofty eloquence, we read that "Felix trembled"—the judge trembled before the prisoner, the oppressor before the oppressed—the result is so surprising, so full of witness to the supremacy of truth, that the most careless hearer is arrested, and yields a passing homage to the majesty of innocence, as it confounds and abashes guilt. And then, who has not wondered and sorrowed at the remainder of the narrative, at the relation of how Felix overcame his convictions, and settled back into a careless and profligate man, who often listened to Paul without being affected by his preaching, and detained

him in prison in the base hope of being bribed to release him? We may justly say of the whole of this narrative, that it can hardly fail to excite the interest and fix the attention of every one before whom it may be brought; so that there is comparatively little danger that its facts will be unheeded, or the inferences which they furnish unobserved, even where there is practically a repetition of the incidents of the temporary conviction and the succeeding indifference.

But it may happen, as we have already intimated, that the striking peculiarities of this narrative will prevent men from paying much attention to accounts which are similar, though not, perhaps, adapted to take such hold on the imagination. It is far from a solitary narrative, if you consider it simply as a narrative of a present power in preaching, followed by no permanent effects. For example, in the case of Herod, as acted on by St. John, you have a very similar history to that of Felix, related by St. Paul. You read, "For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and a holy; and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly." This history may not be conveyed in so remarkable a form as that of Felix and St. Paul; the related events may not address themselves so powerfully to the casual hearer; but we are inclined to think that, on the whole, it is the more singular of the two, furnishing the more cause for wonder, and the more material of instruction. We will dwell a little on the history; for, as you will presently see, it furnishes a most apt illustration of our text.

You must all remember the circumstances of the death of John the Baptist. Herod had formed an unlawful connection with the wife of his brother, and John, too faithful to allow vice to pass unrebuked amongst the

great, any more than amongst the mean, denounced the wickedness, and, like Paul with Felix, boldly told Herod of his crime. It does not appear that Herod himself was moved to any great anger by the remonstrance of the Baptist; but it is certain that he did not so hearken to that remonstrance as to repent of his sin. He persevered in the unlawful connection, perhaps owning in his heart its unlawfulness, and therefore disposed to shield his reprover, but too much enthralled by a guilty attachment to take the bold resolution of obeying his convictions. But the partner of his crime, equally reluctant to forsake the sin, was not equally ready to tolerate its upbraider. Herodias was fired with indignation against the preacher who had put her to shame, and longed and laboured for revenge. It tells much for the sincerity of Herod in his protection of John that Herodias was obliged to cast about for methods of effecting the destruction of that herald of the Christ. We cannot doubt that this imperious and bloodthirsty woman urged Herod to the putting John to death, representing to him the insult she had received, and beseeching him, by the affection which he professedly bore her, to grant her revenge; but all to no purpose. Herod was perfectly assured that John had spoken only truth and done only right; and if he had not courage enough to abandon a favourite sin, he seems to have had conscience enough to determine that he would not, at least, add murder to adultery. Herodias, therefore, as you will remember, had recourse to artifice. She sent her daughter to dance, on a great festival, before Herod and the assembled lords of Galilee, thinking to fascinate the Tetrarch, and ensnare him into a promise. She succeeded but too well. Herod, enchanted by the gesture and grace of the damsel, swore to give her whatsoever she

should ask, even though her demand reached to one half of the kingdom. She acted under the direction of her mother, and asked what was dearer to that revengeful woman than a moiety of the empire, the head of John the Baptist in a charger. It tells again in favour of Herod, that it sorely grieved him to hear this demand. He had professed himself ready to part with half his kingdom; but he was not ready to put John to death, though he had cast him into prison; and we infer, therefore, that he would rather have been stripped of half his power than have surrendered his reprover to the malice of his enemies. He felt, however, though he ought not to have felt, that he was bound by his oath—as though it could have been a question of casuistry whether a rash promise should be broken or kept by the beheading of an innocent man. It is hardly uncharitable to think that Herod was secretly not unwilling to find himself, in some sense, obliged to order the execution of John, and thus, as he might fancy, enabled to rid himself of a reprover without incurring a sin. But, be this as it may, the device of Herodias prevailed; and he of whom prophets in far-back ages had spoken, who had been born out of the ordinary course of nature, and who had gone before Messiah "in the spirit and power of Elias," perished in a dungeon by the hands of the executioner, leaving his fate as a witness that they must prepare themselves for the worst persecution who are intrepid enough to rebuke the vices of the great.

We take this review of the circumstances of the death of the Baptist, that you may learn that Herod, though the slave of his lusts, was not wholly insensible to the power of truth, but was rather, in a measure, influenced by his prisoner John, even as was Felix by his prisoner

Paul. Nay—for this is the point to which we are most anxious to bring you—it would seem that Herod went much beyond Felix. Their circumstances were similar, inasmuch as the two were guilty of the same crime, and upbraided with it by a messenger from God. But Felix appears to have felt nothing more than a passing conviction; he trembled for a moment, and then settled into apathy; whereas John gained, as it would seem, something like a lasting hold upon Herod, and influenced him to the doing much, though not all, that was faithfully prescribed. We gather this from the words already quoted from St. Mark, which set Herod before us under a most extraordinary point of view. It is declared that Herod "feared John," and that, too, on the very ground of his knowing that he was a "just man and a holy." It is added that he "observed him," or gave heed, as the phrase may probably denote, to his example and precepts; and this was not a marking or listening without any corresponding effect, for we next read that "when he heard him he did many things, and heard him gladly."

It is this last statement, a closely parallel statement to that of our text, which is so full of interest and instruction, and which makes the case of Herod far more remarkable, as we think, than even that of Felix. We are not told of Felix that he ever did more than tremble; there is no register of his having taken any steps in consequence of his convictions. Not merely was he not induced by St. Paul's reasoning of "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," to put away Drusilla, but it does not appear that he made any correction whatsoever in his practice. At least, since he detained Paul in prison, in hopes of obtaining money for his release, it is

evident that he remained a corrupt judge and an unjust governor, as well as a hardened adulterer. It was not, however, the same with Herod; we are distinctly told that he "did many things," did them—for this is the gist of the matter—in consequence of what he heard from the Baptist; and though we are not informed precisely what those things were, we gather sufficiently from the office of him at whose bidding they were done that they must have been things which accorded with the known will of God. Neither is even this the most remarkable respect in which the moral effect produced upon Herod transcended that of which Felix was the subject. You read that Felix trembled when he heard Paul preach, and you hardly wonder that, when the eloquence of such a man as the great Apostle to the Gentiles was employed on so fearful a topic as that of judgment to come, it should have thrilled the guilty ruler, surrounded though he was by all the retinue of greatness, and forced him to exhibit tokens of dread and perturbation. But you do not read that Herod trembled. You would have been prepared for that. The austere Baptist, who had lived in the wilderness, and whose very aspect was likely to strike awe into the profligate, might well have been expected to cause a guilty man like Herod to shrink back aghast, and to show by his agitation that the terrors of the last Judgment were upon him.

It is not so, however; you read only of Herod that he "heard John gladly." Gladly? What are we to say to this? We looked for fear; but whence could come joy? And thus, as you must all see, the case of Herod is a most accurate illustration of what is alleged in our text, except, indeed, that it goes still further, inasmuch as Herod not only listened to John, but did, in a measure, the things that were prescribed. If, however, you set aside his

doing many things, and confine yourselves to the gladness which he derived from his preaching, then you have the precise case sketched in our text. Here is a stern and vehement preacher who, like Ezekiel, denounces wickedness, and threatens wrath; and the hearer, in place either of being awed into repentance, or appalled by the remonstrance, or even chilled into indifference, derives a sort of pleasurable excitement from the tragic and ominous harangue: you cannot say to the Baptist, Thou art unto Herod a terror, or a fear, or a burden; you can only say, "Lo, thou art unto him as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument."

You see, then, why we have dwelt so long on the case of Herod. There was, to a certain extent, a close resemblance between the Baptist and Ezekiel. Both were stern preachers, charged with messages of woe and tribulation. In no part of the Bible do you find severer or more vehement denunciation than in the writings of Ezekiel; and you might have expected that they who sat around the Prophet, and heard his terrific invective, would, if not moved to the forsaking evil ways, have at least avoided for the future listening to what was so harsh and repulsive. Yet it was not so: the impenitent flocked in crowds to hearken to the Prophet: there was something of excitement in his wild and withering oratory; and it was just the same as if they had gathered round a musician of magnificent power and exquisite taste: they were carried away by the eloquence, as they might have been by the melody: there was a hold on the imagination, though none upon the conscience; and the orator, whose whole aim it was to rouse men to contrition and amendment, virtually did nothing but help his hearers to while away an hour which

might otherwise have hung heavy on their hands. They heard Ezekiel "gladly," just as Herod heard John; but it was a gladness which had nothing to do with the joy of the penitent who forsakes evil ways and finds acceptance with God.

And we wish to speak to you, with all faithfulness, in a case which is thus proved possible, if not common —the case of persons who may derive pleasure from the preachings of the Gospel, and yet not be moved by it to the abandoning their sins. Indeed we believe that there may not only be cases amongst us which go as far as this, but cases which go further—cases in which not only is the word heard "gladly," but in which, as with Herod, many things are done in consequence of what is heard, though men stop short of what the Gospel requires. A sense of uneasiness under powerful rebukes, and the wish to be able, in some measure, to prove to themselves that they are not utterly indifferent to repeated remonstrances, may cause the hearers to avoid certain things which the preacher denounces, and to attempt certain things which he prescribes. Do I not know that it is a distressing thing for those who sit around in one of our weekly assemblings, to hear denunciations of faults to which they feel themselves prone? And if there be so clear a delineation of any particular case—as of the sensualist, or of the revengeful man, or of the domestic tyrant—that an individual might fancy that he had been sitting for a portrait, will not that individual be as though he sat upon thorns, imagining that all around are applying the description and recognising the likeness? And why should I not think that, merely out of fear of these cutting reproofs, people may be induced to attempt certain reforms—not that they are really in dread of the judgment of God, but that they have a dislike to the

remonstrances of man, and would fain stand well with their fellow-creatures, though as yet almost indifferent as to how they stand with God?

We care not whether it be through the energy of addresses which you hear from the pulpit, or through the workings of conscience, or roused by some other instrumentality, but we are persuaded of many of you, that they may be stirred, like Herod, to the going to a certain point in reformation, but, like Herod, stop short of genuine repentance. They give up one thing after another, according as conscience is more and more urgent; but the favourite practice—the darling sin—this still retains its mastery, whilst less cherished habits are broken, and less powerful desires repressed. The man whose master-passion is covetousness may become most rigidly moral, though he had not heretofore been distinguished by purity of life; but the increased morality, in place of being attended with a diminished covetousness, may be only a makeweight with conscience against an abiding, and even a growing eagerness for gain. It is the same in the case of every other master-passion. Until it be that passion which is withstood, until it be Herodias which is put away, there is no evidence of genuine repentance. All that is surrendered may be nothing more than proof of the value which is put upon that which is retained. If you would discriminate between reformation and repentance; if you would know whether you have limited yourselves to the former, and are yet strangers to the latter, examine what it is you keep, rather than what it is you give up. Reformation will always leave what you love best to the last; whereas repentance will begin with the favourite sin, and go at once to the root, in place of cutting at the branches.

We have the Jews thronging round Ezekiel; thronging in their impenitence; thronging in their determined adherence to their idolatries and vices. And the Prophet is not sparing in his denunciations. He is not prophesying smooth things; saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Are the Jews painfully affected? Since they are resolved to give no heed to Ezekiel, do they not, at least, turn away in insolence and disgust, resolving that they will never listen again to the ravings of so wild an enthusiast? Nothing of the sort. There they sit, like fascinated things: they come again and again as to an intellectual treat, or to a fine exhibition of genius; and God has to say—here is what we must consider and account for—God has to say to this stern messenger of woe, a messenger from whom, you might have thought, the cold and the careless would have instinctively shrunk, "Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not."

Now we turn again for illustration to the cases of Felix and Herod. We have already shown you that Herod went far beyond Felix, and that he "did many things;" for we have no reason to think that the Roman governor attempted any reform whatsoever at the bidding of St. Paul. But perhaps the contrast is yet stronger in reference to the immediate effect which preaching produced; and the generality of minds will be more struck at observing that Herod heard John gladly, whilst Felix trembled at the reasoning of St. Paul. It was the same with the Jews—they heard Ezekiel gladly: he was unto them as a very lovely song. There was a power in the Prophet, as there was in the Baptist, of exciting the

torpid feelings of jaded voluptuaries; and though, from the nature of the case, his power could only excite painful emotions, yet may there have been a pleasure in the being excited at all, which would render the depraved people willing auditors of the unflinching preacher. We suppose that the exact parallel is of frequent occurrence in our own day. We do not believe that, if a minister be mighty in setting forth "the terrors of the Lord," so that he can make the retinue of Judgment pass in almost visible procession, and describe with such vividness the portion of his hearers, if they are found amongst the lost, that they shall seem to witness their own deep anguish, and catch their own wild cry—we do not believe that, if the minister, thus powerful in delineating the wrath of the Almighty, were to take that wrath for his subject Sunday after Sunday, he would thin his church of those who had most cause to dread the wrath: we rather believe that he would be increasingly thronged by eager listeners, who, so far from being repelled by his known energy in making men tremble, would come for the very purpose of being made to tremble.

There was a very distinguished French preacher, who had composed a magnificent and overpowering sermon on the last Judgment, the celebrity of which caused him frequently to deliver it. And whensoever it was known that this sermon would be preached, the whole of Paris was stirred, and men of all classes and all views rushed eagerly to the church. They went, knowing what they were to hear, and what effect they were to look for—even as the spectators of a tragedy are already in possession of the plot and the dialogue, and can tell you beforehand where they may expect to be made to weep, and where to shake with fear. And therefore,

so far from supposing any inconsistency between the trembling of Felix and the gladness of Herod, or Ezekiel's being to the Jews as one who could "play well upon an instrument," we can think that these latter feelings were but accompanyings of the trembling. Neither party was touched at heart by the Prophet's denunciations; for then Herod would not have felt gladness, but sorrow and contrition; and Ezekiel would have been to the Jews as a wild shriek of woe, and not as "a very lovely song;" but there was an excitement of the animal feelings, and this was a pleasure, and men were glad at its repetition.

We should have augured better for Herod, had he not heard John gladly; and for the Jews, had Ezekiel's oratory not been to them as the music of a very skilful player—had both parties shrunk from the intrepid reprover, in place of deriving a sort of gratification from his reproofs. There are none for whose safety we have stronger apprehensions than for that of those who, remaining unconverted, can attend, with a measure of complacency, the ministrations of a preacher who is frequent and fervent in denouncing God's vengeance on every acting of unrighteousness. There is nothing to be said for their complacency, but that it just results from a passion for excitement which they are determined to indulge, and for which they find gratification in the preacher's harangues, so that they literally draw a temporary pleasure from their own future misery, and convert their final doom into an engine for giving a passing impulse to their torpid sensibilities. We pray you, therefore, to take heed how you confound the being interested in preaching with the being interested in the things preached. And if, when discourse turns on the dread things of coming wrath, you are conscious to yourselves of an emotion of fear, and the very blood seems to curdle

at the heart, do not conclude from this, your felt terror, that you are possessed of a just awe of the judgments of God.

Because you are made to tremble, you may easily fancy that you have a just apprehension of God's wrath, and even that you have duly prepared yourselves against a day, of whose terrors you can hear with something of eager emotion. And therefore have we laboured to show you that there may be a complacency, and a gladness, beneath the preaching of the Word, when that preaching is a preaching of vengeance, which are wholly unconnected with any effort to escape what is threatened, but quite consist with the remaining exposed to it, with no shelter against its fury, and even with no real dread of its coming. But if the preaching take a different turn, and there be, interspersed with the descriptions of vengeance, descriptions of the privileges and portions of believers in Christ, how easy, on insufficient grounds, to take these latter descriptions to yourselves, and to reckon on as your own what they so exquisitely sketch. Here indeed it is that Ezekiel may be unto his hearers as "a very lovely song." If a man have but persuaded himself, without good reason, of his own conversion and security, every description of hell may give him pleasure, as showing him what woe he has escaped; and every description of Heaven, as showing him what joy he shall possess. There is nothing needed but that a man work himself into a notion of his being a believer, and it may be a source of the greatest satisfaction to him to attend the ministrations of the Word; and then this satisfaction itself will just help to confirm him in his delusion, seeming like a proof that he has a spiritual perception, and enjoys spiritual truths.

It is therefore a matter of prime moment, that we warn all

our hearers against the inferring that they have undergone a moral change, from the finding that they have pleasure in listening to the Gospel. If converted, they will listen with pleasure: but they may listen with pleasure, and, nevertheless, be very far from the Kingdom of God. Herod heard John, and the Jews heard Ezekiel, gladly; yet the former had not put away Herodias, nor the latter their idols. We have not space to go into all the producing causes of this false gladness; but we have said enough to set those who feel interested in hearing God's word, and who may be disposed to take the feeling as an evidence of conversion, on the carefully examining whether they are not deceiving themselves, and whether their gladness ought not to be their sorrow.

There is many an enthusiastic lover of music who mistakes for piety and religious emotion the feelings of which he is conscious, as the sacred anthem comes pealing down the aisles of a cathedral. Just because he feels an elevation of soul, and a kindling of heart, as on a tide of melody, poured forth from a crowded orchestra, comes floating to him the psalmody of the sweet singer of Israel, he will imagine that he has really an affection towards spiritual things, and really aspires after Heaven. Alas, alas! though music may indeed be an auxiliary to devotion, it proves no devotion that you can be thrilled, and lifted out of yourselves, by the power of music: it is altogether on your natural feelings—on sensibilities that may or may not be drawn out by religion—that the lofty strain tells with so subduing an effect; and even when you have been most carried away and overcome by the varied notes, there is no reason whatever why you might not return from the Oratorio of the Creation, and ascribe the universe to

chance; or from that of the Messiah, and be ready with the Jews to crucify the Christ.

It is the same with preaching. The eloquence of Ezekiel was stern and severe; it was commonly employed on wrath and calamity: yet "thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument." You may, then, alternately tremble and soar, and weep and exult, as there pass before you the serious truths of the Bible; but you are not to take this for any necessary evidence that the truths themselves have power over your souls. You must judge this power by what you are out of church; you must read it in the sermon of your own lives, in subdued lusts, vanquished passions, endeavoured duties. Do not form your opinions of yourselves just when excitement may pass for piety, or the gladness of the hypocrite for that of the believer: get your information in church, and then go home to apply it in deciding your condition. O what may a minister become, when men have heard gladly, and yet remained unconverted! If they who are yet fast bound in the fetters of sin persist in wickedness, and thus do their part towards frustrating those who watch for their souls as they that must give account, alas! the memory of what they now hear gladly, but vainly, may haunt them when there is no place for repentance: the minister may rise before them as an accusing spirit, and what has been to them as "a very lovely song," justify their being sentenced to the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

SERMON VIII

THIS IS THAT KING AHAZ

"And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord: this is that king Ahaz."—2 CHRON. xxviii. 22.

THE monarch referred to in these words was the son of Jotham, and the father of Hezekiah—both of them pious and exemplary kings. Of Jotham we read, "He did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did." And his righteousness produced a manifest blessing; for it is added, "So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." Hezekiah, as we all remember, was pre-eminent amongst the monarchs of Judah for love of God, and zeal for His glory. Of him we have the memorable account, "He wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began, in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered." But Ahaz was one of those wicked kings, whose lives so darken the histories of Judah and Israel. Nay, he went beyond most of them in iniquity. We read of him, "He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baal. Moreover, he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel."

Strange, that he should have been the son of the pious Jotham: strange, that he should have been the father of the pious Hezekiah. Brought up religiously himself, he becomes infamous for irreligion: whilst Hezekiah, in spite of all the evil influence of a profligate father, becomes illustrious in godliness. We are neither to depreciate, nor to magnify, the advantages of a religious education. It were too much to conclude that the child of the righteous will always be righteous: but, then, it were equally too much to conclude that the child of the wicked will always be wicked. But, on the other hand, the general testimony of experience is all in favour of the benefits of a religious education: exceptions there may be, and are: and, when they occur, they acquire a degree of notoriety, which perhaps causes their number to be greatly exaggerated: but, ordinarily, it is sooner or later found that those who have been religiously brought up acquire a religious character: the seed, sown in youth, lies buried a long time, but then suddenly germinates; and, comparatively, it is not often that a pious Jotham is succeeded by an impious Ahaz. But neither, on the other hand, are we to conclude that the want of religious advantages in youth will always be productive of an irreligious character. This, indeed, were to suppose that God visited upon children the sins of their fathers, in a sense and a measure which we could not pretend to reconcile with His justice.

But such is not the case: every man has sufficient opportunity of becoming religious. We have not only assurance, from the known attributes of God, that no man shall be left to perish in irreligion, simply because his parents failed to train him in the right path—we have also the evidence of facts, that from an impious

stock may often spring a righteous shoot. If Jotham were succeeded by Ahaz, Ahaz was succeeded by Hezekiah. That Jotham had an Ahaz for his son should be a warning to religious parents, admonishing that they be not too sanguine as to the result of their labours; and, above all, suggesting that there may be enough, in the defects of those labours, to prepare for the bitterest of disappointments, that of seeing children grow up without the fear of the Lord. That Hezekiah had an Ahaz for his father, this, on the other hand, should both warn and encourage those whose parents never taught them the knowledge of God: it should warn them that wickedness is not hereditary, and that the irreligion of the father has not necessarily, or so as to furnish an excuse, fastened irreligion on the child: it should encourage them, as proving that, however neglected their earlier days may have been, their maturer may be distinguished by superior devotedness to the service of God.

But we are now to confine ourselves to what is told us of Ahaz himself, and more particularly to that brief but emphatic account of him which is contained in the words of our text. We have already brought you sufficient evidence from Scripture of the gross idolatry of which he was guilty. You will feel that it only consisted with that dispensation of temporal punishment and reward, beneath which the Jews lived, that his doing "after the abominations of the heathen" should have straightway provoked signal vengeance. Accordingly "the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the King of Syria, and into the hand of the King of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter." But in vain was Ahaz thus sorely chastened: he had a heart too hard to be softened by even so heavy a blow. In place of humbling

himself before God, whom his iniquities had offended, and endeavouring to obtain his favour through repentance and amendment, he sent unto the King of Assyria for help, and stripped the Temple of its riches, that he might buy for himself the unholy alliance. But God caused his proud schemes to issue in nothing but his multiplied confusion. Judgments had failed to bring him to a better mind, and therefore was he sealed, so to speak, for destruction. For this, you will at once observe, is the drift and point of our text: a sort of brand is fixed upon Ahaz: he is singled out, as it were, and made a mark for the finger of indignant scorn—"this is that king Ahaz." But why? Because "in the time of his distress he did trespass yet more against the Lord." And the historian proceeds to inform us what the new, or increased, trespass was, of which Ahaz was guilty in the day of calamity. "For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus which smote him, and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them that they may help me." O blinded and obdurate man! he would not see that his distresses were owing, not to assistance vouchsafed by false gods to Syria, but to assistance withheld by the true God from Judah! No wonder that it is added of these gods of the Syrians, "But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel."

Now this history of Ahaz, like every other in the Bible, is written for our warning and instruction; and it becomes us not to make too sure that the brand, or stigma, fastened on that monarch, might not be transferred, in some cases, to ourselves. Let us strive to show you the special enormity which justifies that Ahaz be pointed out for special condemnation; and, yet further,

the likelihood that his offence may be copied, and that too not merely in the general, but even in minuter particulars. May God give you the hearing ear, and the understanding heart, whilst we search whether the brand, "This is that king Ahaz," may not justly be affixed on every one, whether a nation or an individual, of whom it may be said, "In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord."

Now you should carefully observe what it is which is here charged upon Ahaz—not, properly speaking, any new sin, but obstinate perseverance in an old. The earliest thing mentioned of him is his idolatry: and, as you learn from passages already adduced, it was idolatry to which distress did but make him cling more tenaciously. The calamities which overtook him, in place of weakening his attachment to false gods, served only to bind him yet faster to their service: he grew, as it were, actually desperate in impiety; for "he gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem." And this is the more memorable, because it admitted of no question whatever, that it was idolatry which brought down the divine judgments on the land: under the Jewish dispensation it was as well established a fact as that day and night follow the rising and setting of the sun, that to worship idols was to incur wrath, and to abjure them to be prosperous. So that Ahaz could not have been in ignorance as to the producing causes of the disasters which fell upon his kingdom: he must have been thoroughly aware of his being engaged in a sort of contest with the Lord God of his fathers; but he determined not to give up in this contest, as though he entertained some wild and impious

expectation that, by continuing the struggle sufficiently long, he should acquire the mastery.

And we need hardly stay to prove to you that, if this be a just description of the conduct of Ahaz, there is no place for wonder that this monarch should be selected, as he is in our text, and made conspicuous, as it were, through all ages, in infamy. It seems to argue some measure of moral sensibility that a man should set about reforming himself, even though he quickly give up the attempt, and return to his vices. But, when no attempt is ever made; when there is a thorough consistency in wickedness, so that all the warnings of God, the remonstrances of His Spirit, and the visitations of His Providence, produce not the slightest visible effect, but the favourite sin is adhered to with a tenacity which seems only to grow with opposition—who can cherish hope in a case such as this? Whilst we know that nothing is too hard for the Lord, we may justly fear that here there is such an amount of resistance as is not to be overcome without the application of a power which would utterly destroy the free-agency of man, and which, therefore, cannot be applied, consistently with our present state of moral probation. God could compel any, and every, man into righteousness: even an Ahaz is not beyond His converting grace: but, if He turn upon the sinner more than a certain power, He leaves the sinner no choice: and it is essential to our being dealt with as accountable creatures, that we should have liberty to decide, that we should make an election, and not act from constraint.

And the case of Ahaz was desperate, because, as all that was likely to turn him from idolatry had been brought to bear in vain, there was nothing to be looked for but his persevering in iniquity till he sank beneath the anger of

God. But, at the same time, his persisting in idolatry, when God visited him with judgment upon judgment, each evidently the produce of idolatry, this displayed such a hardness of heart, such a settled defiance of God, such an impious purpose of trying, so to speak, which were the stronger of the two, that we could only expect his being singled out by the historian, and branded above all who went before, or came after. It was exactly the case of a man who should persist in a sin of which blindness was the threatened penalty; who should find his eyesight growing dimmer and dimmer, and who should still go on, as though bent upon trying whether he could not weary out God, and force Him at last to desist from the contest.

Therefore is this king conspicuous in infamy. Others may have committed similar enormities: but others did not strengthen themselves in the commission by the judgments they provoked. This is the frightful thing—that what God does, with the manifest design of turning us from a sin, should only settle us more obstinately to its practice. It is not so much the sin itself, as the perseverance in it, in the very face and experience of its penalties. Ahaz had made his sons pass through the fire to Moloch—but the brand is not put on him for that. Ahaz sacrificed and burnt incense under every green tree—but the brand is not put on him for that. Ahaz robbed the Temple of God, and profaned its holiest things—but the brand is not put on him for that. The indelible reproach was that he continued to do these things when God had visited him with judgment, designed, as he well knew, to keep him from doing them. This was in defiance of God, the challenging Him to combat, the setting Him at nought; and therefore, be-

cause "in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord," let Ahaz stand for ever infamous amongst the infamous: let him be marked for ever with the stigma, "This, even this, is that king Ahaz."

Now you can hardly fail, my brethren, to be struck by the fact, which we have thus exhibited at length—the fact that it was not so much the sin to which Ahaz was prone, which gained for him the being branded with infamy, as the persisting in that sin, when it had visibly provoked the vengeance of God. The sin was bad enough: it was idolatry of the foulest, most flagrant, description: nevertheless, the brand, "This is that king Ahaz," does not follow on the statement, "He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel," nor on that, "He made molten images for Baalim," nor even on that, "He did according to the abominations of the heathen"—but on one which perhaps, at first sight, seems scarcely to involve an equal atrocity, "In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord." Ah! my brethren, you will see at once what it is to which we are unavoidably led by this fact, what it is on which we must insist, and against which we must warn you. Unsanctified affliction—affliction which, designed to turn us from our sins, fails to produce such effect, but leaves us as it found us, bent on serving idols—is it not this of which Ahaz is so fearful an example? is it not this for which Ahaz stands branded with infamy?

There cannot be need of proof that it is both the design and the tendency of affliction to unsettle us, as it were, with regard to the present world; that, being made to feel that this is not our home, we may fix our affections on things, invisible indeed, but enduring; affliction, by stamping vanity on created good, proving

by how slight a tenure we hold what we most prize, reminding us, that even if what we have be not taken from us, the day cannot be distant when we must be taken from it—affliction does much, at least is fitted to do much, towards destroying that apparent superiority which attaches to temporal things, and showing them in their true light, notwithstanding what they gain from the being able to address themselves so immediately to the affections. But, alas! what is it that men ordinarily do in their distress? Do they turn from their idolatry, or are they more confirmed in their idolatry? Look at that family: they seek their happiness in the world: the idols which they serve are those of fashion and pleasure; and the haunts which they frequent those of earthly amusement and dissipation. Have they been altogether let alone in their idolatry? have they had no express warrant against this making their children pass through the fire, this burning incense in the temples of folly, this sacrificing to the deities of the world? Nay, they have had trouble upon trouble. Death has burst in upon them in the moment of revelry, and taken away one after another; the youngest, perhaps, and the lightest-hearted: many a choice plan has been mysteriously frustrated, many a bitter disappointment experienced!—as though God had taken pains to strip the world of disguise, and to display its true colours, they have been made to feel that what they loved could not satisfy them, what they worshipped could not help them. But what effect has distress wrought on this family? Alas! they are as devoted as ever to the world. In vain hath death been amongst them: in vain hath sorrow, of one kind or another, invaded them: as Ahaz did but build new altars as God brought on him new judgments, they have tried new diversions, new

schemes, as they have found themselves disappointed in the old. In place of having been shaken in their attachment to the earth and earthly things, by successive shocks of affliction, they have seemed literally all the more confirmed: when we have thought that what they have undergone could scarcely have failed to drive them from the haunts of the world, to force them from scenes which they had hitherto frequented, whether for the blandishments of pleasure, or the accumulation of wealth, we have heard of them as returning, with increased avidity, to the dissipated throng, or again taking an eager lead in the great strife of covetousness.

There is nothing imaginary in this delineation. The spectacle is far enough from uncommon, of a family which seems, resolutely and doggedly, to set itself to the clinging tenaciously to the world, in exact proportion to the efforts made, by a gracious and long-suffering God, to weaken its hold;—which appears to gain nothing from every new lesson as to the vanity of the creature, but new determination to prefer it to the Creator. Alas! for such a family! Tell me not of a family as attached to earthly pleasure. Tell me not of a family as presenting few or no tokens of moral hopefulness, because its members are frequent at the public show, and seem to have no object but that of dissipating life. Has God yet visited them with much chastisement? Has the frequent funeral darkened their doors? Has trouble broken in, like an armed man; and are they, notwithstanding, and perhaps even in greater measure, devoted to the revel and the show, the pomps, the vanities, the enchantment of this shadowy state? Then, indeed, I must tremble for them. I could yet anticipate their being brought to a better mind, whilst told only of their fondness for plea-

sure, their attachment to the world, their forgetfulness of God. But, when told, as of Ahaz, "In the time of their distress did they trespass yet more against the Lord," oh! I feel as if there were written of them, "This is that family," even as of him, "This is that king Ahaz."

And why should unsanctified affliction be so perilous a thing? Nay, you will hardly ask this—the question almost answers itself. If affliction be an instrument employed of God to the weaning us from idols, and if it fail to produce such an end, we evidently provoke God to leave us to our own devices—the last and worst of the divine judgments; for do you not remember how it is written, "Ephraim is joined unto idols, let him alone"? It is no unimportant thing, viewed relatively to our position as accountable beings, that we have had our trials and troubles. We shall be called to a reckoning for them hereafter, even as for the means of grace which we have been privileged to enjoy. Sorrows, like sermons and sacraments, will be witnesses, either for us or against us, at the judgment-seat of Christ. On the very principle on which I warn you to take heed how you hear, I warn you to take heed how you suffer. In the season of affliction—and through that season every one of you must pass—God's call to you emphatically is that you see whether, like Ahaz, you have not set up altars to idols, that you put away from you the images, and consecrate yourselves undividedly to the service of your Creator. And, if you neglect this call, if you come out from affliction, as you entered it, worshippers of visible things—rather, if (for God's dealings are never wholly without effect: where they do not loosen, they confirm, the hold of the world upon the heart) then you pass

through tribulation, and are only, like Ahaz, more fixed in attachment to idols—you will defeat a gracious purpose on the part of Him who "willeth not the death of a sinner," even as when you resist the invitations of the Gospel, or put from you the free offer of salvation through Christ.

Ahaz fancied that their gods had helped the Syrians, and made them prosperous: therefore did he build altars and offer sacrifices to these gods. Thus, also, persons in sorrow and trial, observing how happy seem those who surrender themselves to the fascinations of the world, resolve that they too will burn incense to the same idols, the gods of the Syrians; and they turn them to the world for support and consolation. Ah! shall not the brand be affixed to their name, as to that of Ahaz? If not affixed now, shall it not be at the judgment? Here is the child who, when his parents died, turned away from the words that were syllabled in their departure, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;" who would not be moved to the owning and loving a Father in Heaven, by the loneliness in which he stood when he had laid his parents in the dust, but who sought out gay companions, who might help him to forget grief—what is to be said of him, but, "In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord"—this is that orphan. Here is the man who, checked in a high career of temporal prosperity by sudden reverses, was no ways moved, by the proved insecurity of earthly possessions, to the seeking treasure above; but whom losses did but render more eager in the pursuit of perishable wealth—what is to be said of him, but, "In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord"—this is that bank-

rupt. Here is the person who, visited with languishing sickness, has longed for recovery only for the opportunity of returning to interrupted pleasures and pursuits; who has not been led, by all the threatening circumstances of protracted disease, to any solemn resolution of forsaking the world, and serving God, but who has, rather, grudged the time spent in solitude as so much withdrawn from favourite occupations and pursuits—what is to be said of him, but, "In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord"—this is that invalid.

We need not multiply instances. We can but entreat you all, whether now under the pressure of sorrow, or only expecting the share in those judgments which fall daily on individuals and households, to remember that afflictions are blessings in disguise; but that these blessings may, like every other, be turned, through our perverseness, into curses; curses not in disguise, but fastening on us for ever a deep brand of infamy. Unsanctified affliction, affliction which does not humble us, which does not wean us from the world, which does not bring us to God—oh! this shall perhaps be the most condemning thing of all. It was not abused prosperity, it was abused adversity, for which Ahaz stands branded. It is sad, if you can receive God's mercies, and yet forget Him: sadder still, if you can experience His judgments, and yet defy Him. "This is that king Ahaz"—who, not in the time of wealth and peace—but "who, in the time of distress, did trespass yet more against the Lord."

SERMON IX

ARIEL

"Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt."
ISAIAH xxix. part of verse 1.

THE word "Ariel" properly means, "the Lion of God," and is elsewhere used of the great brazen altar, on which the sacred fire blazed, and which might be said to devour as a lion the sacrifices presented on it unto God. In our text, however, it is quite evident that Ariel is used, for some reason or another, as a name of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was "the city where David dwelt," and, therefore, it must be on Jerusalem that woe is here denounced by Isaiah; and it is very remarkable that such a description as this should be subjoined: "the city where David dwelt." If it had been, Woe to Ariel, the city where flagrant sins are committed, the city which is filled with idols, and overrun with all kinds of abomination, we should have seen at once the force of the sentence, and must have felt the wrath warranted by the specified crimes. But why bring it as the chief accusation against Jerusalem—indeed as the only charge that was to justify God in pouring out vengeance—that it was "the city where David" had "dwelt?" David had long been dead; great changes had occurred; and it would be making the sentence tame and insignificant to suppose it to contain simply an historical reference—the assertion of a fact which no one doubted, but which was wholly unconnected

with the present message from God. We must rather believe that Jerusalem is characterized as "the city where David dwelt," in order to show that it deserved the woe about to be denounced. This is evidently mentioned as aggravating the guiltiness of the city, and as in some way proving that it might expect to be visited with more than common vengeance; and we seem warranted in concluding at once, from our text, that the having been the residence of men eminent by their piety, by their zeal for God, and their earnestness in preserving the purity of His worship, entails a weighty responsibleness on a city or a country; —so that if, in any after time, that city or country should degenerate in godliness, and become by its sins obnoxious to vengeance, it will be one of the heaviest items in the charge brought against it. This it is which we regard as clearly the doctrine laid down in the text; and it will be our endeavour to trace the connection between the woe which is denounced and the fact which is alleged. In other words, let us set ourselves to the carefully considering how it justifies the woe which the Prophet utters against Jerusalem, that Jerusalem could be described as "the city where David dwelt."

Now it is an obvious and simple principle, that we are answerable to God for every blessing received at His hands, so that we cannot possess a single privilege which will not, if neglected or abused, be brought against us as a charge, and heighten our condemnation. This is a principle of which we can be sure that its workings may be traced in national as well as individual appointments— nay, perhaps more clearly in national than in individual, inasmuch as it is only in this life that communities can be dealt with in their collective capacity, whilst the future is the appointed season of retribution to their component

members. And ought it not to be regarded as a national blessing when God endows men of distinguished rank with distinguished piety, and disposes them to the employing all those advantages which high station confers on the promoting the cause of genuine religion? Is it not a benefit to the commonwealth when He fulfils His own promise to His Church, making kings its nursing fathers, and queens its nursing mothers, and thus enlisting on the side of piety that influence and authority by which it is too commonly discountenanced and opposed? We regard this as an incalculable advantage, because never can vice be so effectively checked, never can the foundations of righteousness be so deeply laid, as when the rulers of a people rule them in the fear of God, and prove by the mode in which they sway the sceptre that they themselves bow to a Sovereign in Heaven. If there were nothing to be taken into account but the force of example, we might be confident that, when righteousness is seen in the high places of a land, it will make special way amongst all classes of a people; but when you consider how much is in the power of those who fill exalted stations, what direct measures they may take in support of religion, how they may propose and pursue, as the great end of legislation, the advancement of piety, you must feel that it is hardly possible to overrate the blessing conferred on a people when God is pleased to place over them a David, a man after His own heart, who will view them as immortal, and rule them for eternity.

And if the blessing be great, then, as we before said, the people's accountableness must be great, so that if they do not vastly and permanently improve under a righteous king, the having had such a king will be a grievous charge when God calls them to a reckoning. This is true, not only of

the contemporaries of the king, but also of their descendants, because it is certain of such a monarch as has been supposed that his measures will be adapted for the propagating piety to a remote generation, and because, therefore, we may safely conclude that there would not, after his decease, come a national degeneracy if there were not forgetfulness of his example and negligence of his ordinances. So that, without yet bringing into account what may have been peculiar in the character and circumstances of David —regarding him only as a king who excelled every other that sat on the throne of Judæa in devotedness to God, zeal for His worship, and earnestness in providing for the spiritual wellbeing of his people, we may well understand why there rested a woe upon Jerusalem as having been the city where David had dwelt. Was it true that the Jews had forgotten the God of their fathers, and had actually turned aside after idols? Was it true that in this city, in the midst of which rose a glorious temple, tenanted by the Shekinah, the visible demonstration of the presence of the Lord, there might be found every kind of moral abomination, so that even the habitations of the heathen were not more crowded with what was offensive to the purity, and insulting to the majesty, of Jehovah? Indeed this was much; and a prophet commissioned with a burden of woe needed only to have asserted these facts, and every one must have been prepared for the denunciation of vengeance.

But he would go beyond this; he would leave no possible room for excuse. Was it through deficiency of instruction, was it through the having been wholly given to iniquitous rulers, that Jerusalem had become thus infamously profligate? Could its inhabitants plead that, in their case, God had not granted that counte-

nance and those supports to true religion which it derives from having royalty on its side? that, at least, if they had sunk low in vice, they had not had to overcome the resistance opposed by the institutions of a monarch eminent in piety? On the contrary, where was the city or the country whose throne had ever been filled by one so illustrious in godliness as the former king of Judah? If it were to be adduced against a people, as justifying their doom, that much had been done for them in respect of righteous government, where was the people who might so easily be convicted, and who must, therefore, be so sternly sentenced as the Jewish? To be descended from those over whom David had ruled was enough to show that there had been ample provision for national piety, and that not a shadow of excuse could be offered for the national wickedness.

And we can imagine the prophet ascending an eminence whence he could look down on the beautiful, but dissolute city. The elders of the people are around him, knowing that the prophetic spirit is about to dictate some message of fearful sublimity, and eager, as were those in the days of Ezekiel, to be delighted with the majesty of the diction, however offensive might be the tenor of the communication. He is bidden to gather into one sentence the enormity in guilt which had made Jerusalem ripe for signal vengeance; and he gazes on the city, and there rise before him its manifold crimes; and he thinks of its idolatry, its licentiousness, and its utter scorn of the authority of God. But just as those around him expect the torrent of indignant invective, and the long catalogue of heinous transgressions, his thoughts recur to former times, when the son of Jesse, the prophet and the king, bound his subjects to the service of God.

Then he seems to have discovered the crowning-point in wickedness. Then guilt seems doubly guilty. Then he forgets what Jerusalem is, and seems engrossed with what Jerusalem might have been. And then, gathering himself up in all the dignity of a messenger from God, he breaks into the exclamation, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city" —not where there is "the image of jealousy," not where extortion is practised, and adultery committed, and blood profusely shed—but worse, more enormous, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt."

But there are other considerations which go to explain why the woe upon Jerusalem should be followed by a reference to David. You are to remember that David was eminent as a prophet of the Lord, that he had been commissioned to announce, in sundry most remarkable predictions, the Messiah, of whom, moreover, he was, in many respects, a signal type. Indeed, there had been other prophets; and you might think that our text would have been equally expressive had Moses, for example, rather than David, been referred to by Isaiah. But, putting out of the account that Moses had never been invested with regal power in Jerusalem, and considering only the prophetic character, it strikes us that there is a peculiar appositeness in the reference to David, because his writings were in the form best adapted to fix themselves in the popular mind. These writings, if we may use the expression, were the national anthems. They were the songs to be chaunted in those daily and annual solemnities which belonged to the Jews in their political, as much as in their religious, capacity, in which the princes were associated with the priests, so that civil was hardly to be distinguished from ecclesiastical. The Hebrew poetry—and most of this

had been swept from David's harp—was woven into all the national observances, and all ranks of the Jews must have been familiar with its strains. And if you think of the effect of what may be called national poetry—for who has never felt his own spirit kindle as he has heard and rejoiced in our National Anthem?—you can hardly fail to allow that it must have been a singular advantage to a people that minstrelsy was consecrated to truth, and that on the swell and peal of their favourite music were borne words which had been dictated by Jehovah Himself!

That people might grow neglectful of sacred records, they might cease to study the mysterious documents on which the finger of Omniscience had graven promises and precepts; but they could not be deaf to the psalmody of the Temple. From childhood upwards their ears were familiar with beautiful melodies. In magnificent processions, in august celebrations, they learned the roll of choral symphonies, harmonious with the praises of Messiah. The national hymns embodied, in fact, the national religion. And as every English child is taught loyalty by the notes of "God Save the Queen," every Jewish child was instructed in piety by the well-known strains of the sweet singer of Israel. Were the deliverances wrought in olden times for their fathers likely to be forgotten by the Jews when an anthem such as this rose from their solemn gatherings: "Praise the Lord, who smote great kings; for His mercy endureth for ever: and gave their land for an heritage; for His mercy endureth for ever." Hear ye not the very children chanting, "Hosanna! blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"—and can the inhabitants of Jerusalem fail to expect and watch for the long-promised deliverer? Hearken again to those

pealing notes—a hundred instruments, a thousand voices, are swelling the chorus, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!"—and shall the Giver of "every good gift, and of every perfect," be neglected, and disobeyed, in a city whose walls are thus made to echo with His praise? Surely if anything could have kept religion alive in Jerusalem it would have been this writing it in the poetry, this weaving it into the music of the nation. It was like taking possession of the strings of a nation's heart, and providing that their vibrations should respond only to truth. And that David had been the chief instrument employed by God in thus familiarising young and old with the great matters of piety, with the hope of a Messiah, with the duties of obedience, with the records of deliverance, this certainly might well cause him to be regarded as a prime benefactor to his country; this might justify the mention of his name when the sinfulness of that country was to be proved without excuse.

Yes, and we might add that, beloved as David was of God, he must have bequeathed blessings to the nation; for righteous kings, like righteous fathers, entail good on the families of which they have been head. Indeed, it is evident, from other parts of the writings of Isaiah, that the memory of David was still a tower of strength to Jerusalem; so that for his sake was evil averted from the city. When Sennacherib encamped his thousands beneath its walls, and the heart even of Hezekiah was dismayed at the threatenings of the Assyrian, it was in terms such as these that God promised protection: "I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake." Was it not, then, like telling the Jews that they were no longer to be borne with for

the sake of David, to pronounce a woe on their city, as the city where David had dwelt? Was it not the declaring to them that the period drew to a close during which the conservative influence of that monarch's piety could make itself felt; even as children, though long spared in recompense of the righteousness of their fathers, may reach a point at which they have filled the measure of their guilt, and at which, therefore, they can receive no further favour as the offspring of those whom God hath loved? So that, in denouncing judgments upon Ariel, as the city where David had dwelt, the prophet might be considered as showing both how just and how terrible these judgments would be. He showed their justice, because the having had amongst them such a king and prophet as David made the Jews inexcusable in their wickedness. He showed their severity, because, if it were the city of David which God was about to punish, it followed that iniquity had reached such a height that forbearance, long manifested for the sake of the most pious of kings, was at length wearied out, and there remained no further place for intercession.

And now, therefore, we may again consider Isaiah as placed whence he might gaze on Jerusalem, and surrounded by a multitude waiting his predictions. Is this the city on which God is about to pour out His vengeance? Can God have forgotten His promises? Is not this the city which was beautified by the most honoured of His servants, one with whom He made "a covenant ordered in all things and sure," one to whom He sware that He would not desert his seed, but would follow them with loving kindness in token how his righteousness had been approved? It is even so; and, nevertheless, upon thee, oh Jerusalem, cometh the woe—fearful proof that it

will be a woe that shall utterly overwhelm thee! And is this matter of surprise? Has God left thee ignorant of His will? Has He taken no pains so to instruct thee in truth that thou couldest not be unmindful of it, couldest not forget it, except of set purpose and wilfulness? The harp of the son of Jesse shall witness against thee. What notes are echoed from yon glorious Temple? It is David who there sings "of mercy and judgment;" it is David who there, in prophetic strain, bids the everlasting gates of the sky fly open, that the King of Glory may come in; it is David who there, in touching and plaintive melody, chants the woes of a mysterious Sufferer, who is to "drink of the brook in the way," and yet to be set as a "King on the holy hill of Sion;" it is David who there threatens, and entreats, and warns, and counsels, in hymns which invite even children—"Come, ye children, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord"—and which might scare the most obdurate, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." And is, then, Jerusalem excusable in its idolatries, its blasphemies, its licentiousness? No, haughty and dissolute capital! I wish to tell thee that thy doom will be terrible: I wish to tell thee that thy doom is deserved: and I do both when, speaking in the name of the Lord of the whole earth, I say to thee, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel," and then simply add, as the description of Ariel, "the city where David dwelt."

Now I do not know that it would have been wise to have occupied you with these illustrations of a seemingly unimportant passage of Scripture, if there had not been involved a principle applicable alike to communities and individuals. It is made the charge against Jerusalem, that it was the city where David had dwelt—the plain inference from this being that it was a great aggravation of the national

wickedness that so righteous a prince, so zealous a supporter of true religion, as David, had sat for years upon the throne of Judah. And, by parity of reasoning, if there have been raised up, in our own country, men mighty in the exhibiting and establishing truth; and if, in the lapse of time, we grow indifferent to truth, and perhaps even half inclined to the errors which were exposed and expelled, will it not be made matter of accusation against us that ours is the land in which those worthies dwelt? will not the woe upon us be followed by a like definition to that which followed the woe on Jerusalem?

You must all see how this holds good in regard of the Protestantism of England, that precious heritage which has been handed down to us from a righteous ancestry, which we are bound to endeavour to keep pure and uninjured ourselves, and to transmit in its integrity to our children. Suppose we were to undervalue the Reformation; suppose we were to think lightly of the errors of Popery; then might our text be regarded as denouncing special woe on ourselves—woe to England, to England, the country where Wickliffe, and Cranmer, and Ridley dwelt! For it is not to be questioned that we shall have much to answer for, if, after God had raised up Reformers, and they, with incalculable labour, and at incalculable cost, had cleansed our Church from the abominations of Popery, we should, in any measure, let go the truth, and make alliance, or truce, with the tenets or practices of Rome. Then would it again be, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt." Then would martyrs and confessors rise as witnesses against us. Then would our own pious monarch, Edward VI., who, though he died in youth, deserved to

be reckoned a David—and David was but a stripling when he slew Goliath—come back, from the grave, to deplore our apostacy, and approve our condemnation. Then would the solemnities of our public worship, our Articles, our Homilies, our Bibles in the common tongue, our Prayer-books, rich in glowing piety, all declare us inexcusable, even as the melodies of the son of Jesse convicted Jerusalem of wilful transgression.

I hope, and I believe, that the heart of England is right in this matter. We may have half lost sight of our privileges in the days of our security. But if Protestantism were really assailed—if there were, whether from within or from without, a bold effort to reinstate that spiritual despotism against which our Reformers struggled, and which, by God's help, those Reformers overthrew, then, thoroughly do we believe there would be roused something of the same spirit in the land, as though an invader's foot were on its shore, or a traitor in its councils. But, without attaching any undue weight to those leanings towards Popery which have, undoubtedly and unhappily, shown themselves amongst us, it can never be out of place that men be reminded of the worth of their privileges, and warned that they never allow those privileges to be tampered with or impaired. This is one simple lesson which we derive from our text. A heavy responsibleness rests on our land, as being the land where there was fought a great battle between error and truth, where men, whose names have come down as watchwords to the Church, dared and died that they might free Christianity from corruptions which went far towards destroying its blessings. This is precisely the responsibleness which lay upon Jerusalem, as the city where David had dwelt. And God grant that we never lose sight of this respon-

sibleness; but that, holding fast to a pure Gospel, to one Mediator between God and man, to a simple yet lofty ritual, we never give cause for the denouncement of a woe which is to draw all its emphasis from a "noble army of martyrs," from the memory of the mighty dead, who counted not their lives dear, that they might vindicate and perpetuate "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Not that this is the only case in which we can find a parallel to Jerusalem as denounced in our text. Woe to many a parish, where has dwelt some devoted minister of Christ. Alas! to how many instances might we point, in which, for years after years, a district has been tended by a faithful, self-denying, energetic pastor who, "publicly and from house to house," has laboured, night and day, to promote its spiritual good. And, to all appearance, he has laboured almost in vain. Though his record is on high, and that Master, who never overlooks even the cup of cold water given in His name, has carefully registered his sacrifices and his toils, yet has he gone down to the grave with but little evidence of successful endeavour—the parish has still been darkened by ignorance, and overrun with profligacy; and his successor, in place of taking up the work, seems to find it as if hardly begun. But is it nothing to the parish, nothing to it in the way of heavy accountableness, that it was so long the scene of that good pastor's labours? Nay, nay—you might go through its alleys and courts, and, seeing them still tenanted by the reckless and the dissolute, you might feel that there was cause enough, in the abounding wickedness which you saw, to account for, and justly, a message of wrath. But, remember how the great Judge keeps reckoning of opportunities vouch-

safed, and means of grace afforded. I think that a prophet, moving through that parish, would fix his thoughts most on the minister who lay cold in his grave; and that, taking up the woe of Isaiah upon Ariel, his burden would still be, "Woe to thee, woe to thee, the city where David dwelt."

And it is not only to a country, or a parish, that the woe of our text might be but too faithfully appropriated. What is to preclude a narrower and more personal application? In many a street of our crowded towns, in many a green lane of our rural districts, might the prophet pause, and place on this or that door his menacing mark. Why has he selected these houses? Admitting that there may be inmates who are not walking obediently to the law of the Lord, is not this the case with other dwellings besides; and why should this cottage, or that mansion, be specially given over to wrath? Ah! you know what the prophet means. In that mansion, in that cottage, dwelt a righteous father, a righteous mother; and these righteous parents did all that parents could do to instill piety into their children, teaching them the good and right way, admonishing them with many tears that "the way of transgressors was hard," and beseeching them to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world." But in vain, in vain. Why, there is even now amongst us, it may be, one of the sons, who, launched into this great metropolis, where so many lie in wait to deceive, has wellnigh forgotten the tears and the prayers of his father and his mother, and is fast giving himself up, in the expressive language of Holy Writ, to "work all uncleanness with greediness." Oh! that he might be warned. It cannot be a negative thing, neither for evil,

nor for good, that he was so carefully trained, and so affectionately admonished. If he will persist in wrong-doing, if he will hearken to the scorner, who would persuade him that religion is but priestcraft, and hell but a fable; if he will give the rein to his passions, and allow himself in those sins, of which he has been told that the end is death—then I must call on the grave to give up its tenants: the forms of his buried parents rise awfully in the midst of us, submitting themselves to our inquiry, testifying that they had striven to keep this their unhappy son from the paths of the destroyer, and that therefore on his own head must rest the wrath and the wasting, "the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched."

You understand now why the prophet paused at that mansion, or that cottage. He shaped his denunciation into the form of our text, Woe to this house, woe to this house, the house where that pious father dwelt, the house where that righteous mother dwelt — woe, woe; for the children are gone astray, and refuse to return; and it must lie heavy on them—heavy in time, heavy through eternity, unless they repent, and do works meet for repentance, that they are the offspring of parents who sought to bring them up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I need not attempt to make further or closer application of our text. You must all see the upshot of the matter—it is but a commonplace truth, if you choose so to call it, yet its importance cannot easily be overrated. Every advantage, every opportunity, which we have ever had, has gone before us to judgment. They are not forgotten because they have passed by, and not been improved. David was dead, but the woe was still on Ariel, where David had dwelt. Oh! that we might

strive, by so improving what may remain, and so repenting for what has been lost, to prepare ourselves for our last account, that we may be received into the city where David dwells, the Lord Jesus Christ, who died that we might live, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

SERMON X

NEW WINE AND OLD BOTTLES

"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."—MATT. ix. 16, 17.

YOU will remember that our Lord employed these illustrations when the disciples of John the Baptist had come to Him, and made it a charge that, whilst they fasted often, He and His disciples fasted not at all; and the whole gist of our Lord's reply is, that fasting was not appropriate to that particular season. He is far enough from implying that fasting was not appropriate to the Christian religion. Some duties were specially required by one season, and some by another; and it would be very unwise to prescribe austerities when they were not demanded by the circumstances of the case, or when men were not prepared for their practice. It would be much the same thing as the repairing an old garment with a piece of new cloth; there would be no suitableness, no agreement between the old and the new; one being much softer, and more pliant than the other, it was likely that the old would be torn through the greater resistance of the new,

and that thus the rent would be only made worse. Or, to take another simile, bottles, not of glass, but of leather, were used in former times, and were liable, when old, to burst through the fermenting of the wine. Men were, therefore, careful, as our Lord observes, to put new wine into new bottles, knowing that, were they to put it into old, they could expect nothing but that the bottles would burst, and thus the wine be lost. And this again illustrates the same truth as the simile of the old cloth and the new. Precepts must be nicely adapted to persons or circumstances: otherwise, if duties were enjoined and commandments delivered without any consideration for the capacities of those from whom obedience was asked, the likely result would be that religion must become altogether distasteful, and that men would be made even worse through the injudicious treatment. This, you see, is the general drift or bearing of the parables; but we must examine more minutely the cases to which these parables apply. Come and let us see what may be likened to the putting new cloth to old, and so making the rent worse; or to the putting new wine into old bottles, to the destruction of both.

Now you will observe that the Pharisees joined with John's disciples in taxing Christ with neglect of the duty of fasting. They were devotedly attached to ceremonial and outward observances, and they naturally looked with great suspicion on the more spiritual religion which Christ laboured to introduce, in which fasting was to be of no worth except as indicating that there was sackcloth on the soul. And if any of these Pharisees, moved by the miracles which Christ wrought, had felt disposed to receive Him as a teacher from God, the thing which they would most naturally have attempted would have been

the making a compound of their own religion and the Christian, so that, whilst they kept what they liked most in their tenets and observances, they might have the advantage of the new revelation; and therefore, what Christ had to denounce in the case of these Pharisees was the lurking notion that Christianity might admit some admixtures from other religions, so that men might bring into its profession their own favourite theories, and find them amalgamate very well with its doctrines. This notion Christ denounces most emphatically in the two parables before us. Christianity, though far enough from being a new revelation, required that the scene should be swept clear for its institutions, peremptorily refusing that there should be blended with the revealed mode of a sinner's acceptance anything of ceremonial ordinance, demanding to be received without admixture, or rejected without reserve.

And it is against this that men in every age have rebelled. They have wanted not only to keep some part of their own favourite systems, but to keep it for the very end which, according to their own theory, it had heretofore answered. Thus generally with good works. It does not content them that Christianity demands good works, that it makes salvation impossible without them, and thus transfers to its system the favourite part of their own; they have been accustomed to account their works meritorious, and they would fain have Christianity account them so too; and this Christianity will not do. If it require and retain fasting and almsgiving, it will not allow them any justifying merit: it may be said to alter their character in granting them admission. Thus, whilst it has much in common with other systems, it is wholly against the being compounded

with those systems in order that the produce may give a mixed mode of obtaining salvation. It offers salvation exclusively through the mediation of Christ; the effects of that mediation being appropriated by faith and exhibited in righteousness. But if a man would blend anything with this mediation, claiming for some performances of his own a share in deserving forgiveness and favour, then is Christianity as much set against that man as though he were the Deist who pronounces it a fable; and in place of looking at him approvingly, because he may have kept some fragments of truth, denounces him unreservedly as having thereby given a colouring to falsehood.

And this is precisely what our Lord seems to have taken occasion to do when Pharisees showed a disposition to become His disciples, provided they might bring with them the fastings which all the world knew to be ostentatious, but which themselves further believed to be meritorious. Their desire was to compound their own religion with that of Christ; but Christ indignantly rejected the thought, and, as though rejoicing in an opportunity of stating that He could allow no admixtures, gave utterance to two parables, that none might have to plead a deficient announcement. As well, He exclaims, might an old garment be repaired with new cloth, or new wine be committed to old bottles, as my religion be employed to make up what is wanting in other systems. The Law, more especially the Law as interpreted, or perverted, by men, can never be blended with the Gospel; the attempt will only make matters worse: self-righteousness in a man professing himself a Christian will be stronger than in any other, because supposed to be an auxiliary to the righteousness of Christ, and more dangerous because en-

tertained in defiance of the express word of God. As, then, the new cloth fastened to the old would but increase the rent, Christianity, grafted on the Law, would but aggravate the separation between man and his Maker. As new wine poured into old bottles would but cause its own loss by the destruction of the bottles, so Christianity, introduced into those who kept all their old doctrines and habits, would not only be wasted itself, but help to deteriorate and damage its recipients.

This, we think, is the force and scope of our Lord's illustrations; and would to God that any of you who may be averse from the simplicity of "the truth as it is in Jesus" might be moved by such parables to the considering their peril. God will admit no rival, and Christianity no ally. God asks the undivided heart, and Christianity undertakes an undivided work. Away with the assistance which philosophy can offer! Away, yet more, with the aids which your own righteousness can furnish! He who trode "the winepress alone" demands to be alone in the office of justifying the ungodly. If you can save yourselves He bids you do it; but if He is to be your Saviour He will have all the merit. And so opposed is the Redeemer to the being made but a helper in place of a deliverer; and the Gospel to any amalgamation with human systems, that you will be less acceptable to God by taking a part than by rejecting the whole, and farther from the kingdom of heaven through advancing to a Christian profession than through stopping in open unbelief. If you receive Christ as "all in all," that He may be made unto you of God "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," He will be everything to you, procuring you forgiveness, opening to you heaven, and communicating the Spirit which will make you "meet for the inheritance

of the saints in light." But if you take Him not as "all in all," it is not sufficient to say that He will be nothing to you: He will be as an adversary: the truth which you mix up with falsehood will make that falsehood more dangerous, because more specious: the condemnation under which you lie will be only the more aggravated, because you have sufficiently proved that it might have been avoided: the righteousness in which you trust will be more offensive in God's sight, because wilfully substituted for that in which He is well pleased. Ah! thus will it indeed come to pass that the rent is made worse, through attaching the new cloth to the old, and that both the liquor and the vessel are lost, if old bottles be taken for holding new wine.

But, further, these parables indicate a consideration on Christ's part for the circumstances of His disciples: they show that duties are not to be pressed indiscriminately on all persons and at all times. Our Lord makes fasting a duty; but, nevertheless, He excuses the children of the bride-chamber whilst the bridegroom was with them, and then gives, as one reason for excusing them, the inexpediency of prescribing austerities to those yet young in His religion: it would only be likely to alienate and disgust them, driving them back to what they had abandoned, and thus making the rent worse, even as would the new cloth fastened on the old. Attend carefully to this. There is all the difference between keeping a duty entirely out of sight, and enjoining it only at a certain stage in Christian experience. Undoubtedly, as a Christian grows in grace he grows fitted for sacrifices, privations, and endurances, which would have quite overcome him if demanded at an earlier point of his career as a believer; and it is not so much Christian prudence as Christian truth to

avoid requiring from the young convert what may justly be required from the practised disciple. If our duties grow, as they certainly do, with our Christian age, it is not merely inexpedient, it is actually erroneous, to ask a beginner to perform a task, or to bear a burden, for which he may not have strength till grown into a veteran.

You may be sure we do not mean to say that anything positively sinful is to be passed over and allowed, as though the convert were not instantly required to abstain from every practice which God's word distinctly disallows. But who does not know that, as men advance in religion, they come to think this or that thing wrong which they had before thought indifferent, and to find inconsistency in what they had reckoned quite harmless? The spiritual discernment is sharpened by exercise; the sensitiveness to evil grows more and more acute; and few things more surprise the advanced Christian, as he looks back on his course, than that he should have been so slow in detecting sin in many of his practices, and so long in forsaking many of his indulgences. And is he, then, to take the rule as it exists with himself after a long line of changes, and to give it to the young convert as that by which he must regulate his steps? Nay; this, we fear, is often done, but this is verily the putting of new cloth to old. The experienced Christian forgets by how many steps his knowledge has been reached, and prescribes for the beginner as if he had made the same progress with himself. Thus, for example, he expects the beginner to attach just the same meaning to "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world"—to include, that is, under such a definition whatsoever he has learnt to include under it himself; whereas, if he will recollect, he will find that his own view of what are "pomps and

vanities" has enlarged with the growth of his spiritual discernment, so that what he now reckons unlawful amusement he long indulged in with no sense of its being condemned by the Gospel.

And is he, then, to impose on the beginner that catalogue of "pomps and vanities" which he has, perhaps, been many years in framing for himself? We think not. If a young person ask me for a list of lawful and unlawful amusements, I have difficulty in answering. I can, indeed, draw for him a certain broad line; but I cannot accurately define all that shall fall without and all that shall fall within. I would simply tell him that anything which unfitted him for spiritual exercises, or anything of whose lawfulness, after praying for direction, he felt any doubt, ought not to be practised, nay, cannot be practised consistently with his duty as a Christian. "Whatsoever," saith the Apostle, "is not of faith is sin." Whatsoever, that is, a man doubts about—whatsoever his conscience is not easy in—that is sinful in this man, though it might not be in another who had no doubts at all. This is my rule with the beginner. Believing him sincere in his desire to serve God, I leave him to frame by experience his own list of "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," satisfied that what his conscience, actuated by the Spirit of God, does not put in that list, is not in his case unlawful; and that it will gradually put there more and more, till he shall, perhaps, go beyond me in what he reckons forbidden. And if a sanction is required for this method of dealing with the beginner, may it not be fetched from the parables in our text? What method is it, if not that which Christ gives as His own in regard of His disciples? He abstained from prescribing austerities at first, not because the

austerities were never to be practised, but because His disciples were not sufficiently advanced to practise them yet. His principle was to deliver them truth as they were "able to bear it," and He feared the loading them with too much, whether for the understanding or the life; and would that His example were more followed.

Religion is continually made repulsive in the eyes of the young because painted as demanding immediately from all what it has gradually obtained from aged disciples. I do not want to disguise religion. God forbid that I should attempt to cheat any one into its profession, by hiding the sacrifices which it necessarily demands. But neither will I forget that religion is a growing thing; that what at last is the huge tree, with overshadowing boughs, is at first the grain of mustard-seed, the very least of its kind: and I will not prescribe for all stages alike. If the aged Christian have learned to live the life of a hermit, I will not tell the young that he must live that life too. If the veteran have renounced a hundred amusements, I will not tell the beginner that he cannot be a Christian if he renounce not the same. I will leave no sin unrebuked, no sin allowed, whether in the old or the young; but I will not say that what is wrong in the old must be also wrong in the young—for this were to deny that God's Spirit teaches by degrees, "line upon line, and precept upon precept." And were I to take an opposite course—were I to impose on beginners whatsoever the advanced believer has been led to do, or to renounce, why, there is nothing to be expected but that those about to "enter in at the strait gate" will be terrified by my descriptions of its narrowness; that, just because I am not careful to proportion the demands of religion to the capabilities of the parties, they will be deterred from re-

ligion as from an impracticable thing, and thereby become confirmed in ungodliness; and there will be nothing to be said of me, but, alas! for the teacher who could thus strangely forget that to put the new cloth to the old is to make the rent worse; and that he must pour the new wine into new bottles, if he would have both preserved.

Now, if we confine ourselves to the second parable, that of the new wine requiring to be poured into new bottles, what is the general truth here inculcated, if not that the doctrines of religion demand a certain suitableness, or preparedness, in the persons to whom they are taught; and that, if there be no attempt in the persons to fit themselves for the doctrines—to adapt the bottles to the wine—there is nothing to be looked for but that the doctrines will be wasted, and the persons, like the bottles, be only injured by what they have received? If you will take the testimony of St. Paul, it was through want of a due preparedness of heart that the Gospel, though virtually preached to the Israelites in the figures and enactments of the law, but increased the condemnation of multitudes that fell in the wilderness. "The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." It was not enough that the word should be preached —which corresponds to the pouring in of the wine—it was requisite that there should be faith in those who heard it, which corresponds to the preparing the vessel for what it is to hold. It may be the pure, the generous wine which is poured forth—the preacher may dispense nothing but the unadulterated Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the great mass of hearers come up to God's house without the smallest preparation of heart, with scarce a thought given beforehand to the solemn duty in which they are about to engage. In place of having been

secretly in prayer that God would give unto them "the hearing ear, and the understanding heart;" in place of having been endeavouring to purge out the old leaven of worldliness and prejudice, that so they might bring with them candid and unoccupied minds; they rush to the sanctuary, as they would to some scene of business or pleasure; conversing, perhaps, up to the moment of entering it on politics, or scandal, or commerce, or fashion; and continuing to give the same things their thoughts, when restrained by the place from giving them their tongues. And what is to be looked for from the attempt to pour the new wine into these unseasoned bottles, but that the wine will be lost and the bottles themselves broken?

Yes—you are not to overlook this peculiarity in the parable—the bottles are broken through the action of the wine; not through any external violence, but simply through the workings of the generous liquid. It is thus with the moral facts which the parables illustrate. The preaching of the Gospel is no inefficient thing, producing no injury where it produces no benefit. It is "the savour of death unto death," where it fails to be "the savour of life unto life." This may be little thought of by numbers who, perhaps, attend Church regularly on Sundays, and spend the intermediate days as those who are ignorant of judgment to come. Yet it is of all hardening things the most hardening, to remain unrenewed under the preaching of the Gospel. Alas! for an audience accustomed to hear the Gospel, but to hear it only with the understanding whilst they shut up the heart! I may pour in the wine—but, at every fresh pouring, there is, so to speak, a fresh rent in the bottles. Every Sunday does but make the matter worse, dismissing the hearers to their engrossing

pursuits, and their ensnaring amusements, but with another unimproved opportunity for which to account, another warning neglected, another effort on God's part resisted, and, therefore, another nerve added to the power of resistance. And thus there is literally taking place what is described in the parable—only that in the parable it is stated that "no man putteth new wine into old bottles;" whereas it does not rest with the preacher to determine what the bottles shall be, but only to take heed that he produce only wine. The hearers come without an effort made to prepare themselves for the receiving divine truth. The bottles are in the state in which they would be carried to a lecture-room, or a theatre, or an exchange, where they would have to receive fresh measures of what is pleasant to the natural taste. But the new wine, which the preacher dispenses, avenges itself, so to speak, on these presumptuous and unprepared hearers. Even if they find it in a measure exciting and pleasant, so that they take the weekly draught with some kind of relish, yet the wine thus received—the Gospel that is heard and not obeyed—turns into that wine of which we read in Holy Writ, "the wine of the fierceness of the wrath" of the Lord. Yes; hear the Gospel, without endeavouring to prepare for receiving it, and without endeavouring afterwards to obey it, and we turn the Gospel itself into an instrument for effecting our being broken and riven—"the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish."

What a subject has been opened before us through extracting the principle of the parables under review! The principle is, that there must be a due proportion between the bottle and the wine; that if that which is good in itself be deposited in that which is not fitted to hold it, the result will be the loss of the wine through the

fracture of the bottle. Let this be considered by all who are in the habit of receiving the Holy Communion. Come not unpreparedly to that sacred ordinance. Take not of the new wine, mysteriously significative, without endeavouring first to cleanse out the vessel. In the words of the exhortation of the Church, "Repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table." We shall be the worse for partaking, if we partake in impenitence and indifference—the new wine in the old bottle will rend the bottle, and make it more incapable than ever of retaining Divine things.

Take one more application. The parable holds good in regard of the joys of Heaven—future happiness can be awarded to none who have not been prepared for it by the Spirit of God. The new wine must be put into new bottles: the old could not contain it. Heaven would be no Heaven to the sensual, the covetous, the proud: its joys would be lost upon them; nay, would only make them miserable: "the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish." There is no truth which is plainer, more self-evident, than this; and yet it is surprising how little it seems, in practice, to be remembered. There is not one of you of whom were I to ask what he hopes for at death, that would not reply—to use the common phrase—that he hopes to go to Heaven. If I were to examine him more closely, he might have no reason to give beyond a general reliance on the mercy of God: but assuming that this mercy is large enough for his case, he takes for granted that Heaven may not only be reached, but enjoyed, by him, let what will be his present dispositions and character. But what a presumption is this! what violence is here done both to reason and Revelation! For both reason and Revelation are distinctly against the opinion

that character can undergo any change after death. "As the tree falls so shall it lie." "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy let him be filthy still"—not only, you perceive, is the wicked to remain wicked; but he is to retain that particular form of wickedness, whatever it may have been, by which he was distinguished whilst on earth.

What then is the hope of the ungodly of entering Heaven when they die? Heaven is adapted to a particular character, and that character they will have lost for ever the opportunity of acquiring. Heaven presupposes certain tendencies, dispositions, and affections in its inhabitants—just as earth is only fitted for beings with certain organs, senses, and capacities. But it will be impossible for the wicked to obtain the tendencies, dispositions, and affections presupposed in the inhabitants of Heaven; and therefore, if placed there, would they be as thoroughly out of their element as any one of us if translated to a planet where the air was such as he could not breathe, the light that which his eye could not gather, the sound that which made no impression on his ear, the food that by which he could not be nourished. Nay, men and brethren, if not made fit for Heaven, we could not live in Heaven. It is full of happiness; but to place any there but the holy would be to place them, so to speak, under an exhausted receiver, where they could only faint and die. Let no man dream of Heaven, if he do not delight in the things which are to constitute Heaven. Suppose him to die in his unrenewed state, and to be admitted for a moment into the Paradise of God. What to him is that sublime anthem which is rolled from innumerable voices? he never here delighted to praise God, and he finds no music in the magnificent Alleluia! What to him the standing in the immediate presence of

Deity, where Cherubim and Seraphim veil their faces? he never here delighted to contemplate his Maker, and he is but terrified by the brilliant manifestation. What to him the stupendous display of the Mediator's triumphs? he would not here have "that man to reign over" him, and he shrinks aghast from the sceptre and the throne. He is utterly lost—miserable in the midst of happiness; agitated in the midst of peace; starving in the midst of abundance; dying in the midst of life! Do ye wonder at this? Nay, ye ought not, after having been solemnly told that, if new wine be not put into new bottles, the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish.

SERMON XI

DEMAS

"For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."
2 TIMOTHY iv. part of verse 10.

WE know very little of Demas beyond what may be gathered from the brief but melancholy notice of our text. In the Epistle to the Colossians, which appears to have been written at least two years before this second Epistle to Timothy, you find St. Paul thus associating him with Luke—"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you." The name also occurs in the Epistle to Philemon, the date of which is the same with that to the Colossians: "There salute thee Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow-labourers." This is the sum of the Scriptural information with reference to Demas; and to this ecclesiastical historians only add, that having forsaken St. Paul through desire of a more secular life, he afterwards embraced the heresy of Cerinthus, and died a denier of the divinity of Christ. But though so little is told us of Demas, there is enough to assure us of certain important particulars. It appears that Demas stood high in the esteem of St. Paul, and that, too, from services actually rendered to Christianity. He calls him his "fellow-labourer," and connects his name with that of the Evangelist "whose praise is in all the churches." It

further appears that Demas must have been, for some considerable time, a companion of St. Paul, and that, too, during a period when the Apostle had to undergo persecution and imprisonment. The Epistle to the Colossians, in which Demas is so honourably mentioned, was written when St. Paul was, for the first time, a prisoner at Rome. The Epistle to Timothy, in which his apostasy is recorded, was probably composed shortly before the martyrdom of St. Paul, when he was for the second time in bonds at Rome. So that it must have been during a most eventful and critical period that Demas adhered to the Apostle—a period specially trying to his constancy, but, nevertheless, presenting no common advantages; for who shall estimate the privilege of frequent intercourse with St. Paul, grown old in labours, and within sight of his reward? And it seems to us very remarkable that it should have been love of the world—not cowardice, not fear—which made Demas forsake Paul on the very eve of his martyrdom. We shall find our best illustrations of the power of this love of the world, and therefore our strongest proofs of the necessity that you guard against it in yourselves, in considering how little was the apostasy of Demas to have been expected, after the progress which he must have made, and amid the advantages which he must have enjoyed. Be these, then, our topics of discourse—Demas an apostate, after having done and endured much in the cause of Christ: Demas an apostate, though he had to quit St. Paul, when that Apostle was on the point of sealing his confession with his blood.

Now, whatever may have been the circumstances under which Demas first made profession of Christianity, it is very clear that the profession must have exposed him to hardship and danger; for he became the companion of

St. Paul at the very time when that Apostle was hunted down by persecution. It was a widely different thing then from what it is now, to avouch belief in Christ; and you cannot imagine a man openly abandoning the religion of his fathers, and joining himself to a sect which was "everywhere spoken against," unless at the moment persuaded that the Gospel was indeed a communication from God. Undoubtedly there were, in the earliest days, as there have been in all succeeding, men who bore the name, and yet were strangers to the power of Christ. But it is hard to think that they were hypocrites from the beginning. If hypocrites at all, they must have imposed on themselves; for where there was so much to deter from Christianity, in place of any temporal inducement to embrace it, we may be sure that it must have been through self-deceit, rather than through any other kind, that they made common cause with the believers in a crucified Saviour. There could then have been little or nothing of that joining the Church, merely through the circumstances of birth, or the prevalence of custom, which naturally abounds where Christianity is the dominant faith—every convert had a great cost to count, and his profession was a guarantee that he expected tribulation.

It is not, therefore, supposable that, in embracing Christianity, Demas was conscious of acting with any insincerity. He must have considered himself a firm believer in Christ; and must have been so considered by those who had most power of judging. There must have been in him, to all appearance, the tokens of genuine conversion—tokens in no degree feigned for the purpose of imposition, seeing they could bear the test of hardship incurred in defence of the truth. Alas! who amongst us will reckon his faith so fixed as to be incapable of allowing a relapse, when he finds that

Demas apostatized though he had perilled all for Christ, and been approved by St. Paul himself as a fellow-labourer in the ministry? But wherein lies our great danger? By what is it most likely that our constancy will be shaken, and our resolve to serve God weakened, if not destroyed? Ah! it is in this that the case of Demas is full of melancholy warning. We do not find that he was scared by the perils which encompassed the profession of Christianity—he must have braved those perils, for he had ministered to St. Paul, whilst a prisoner for Christ. We have no right to say that he shrunk from the labours which Christianity imposed—he had been a "fellow-worker" with Evangelists, and seems to have done much in the great struggle with idolatry. Of course, it is possible that some feeling or another, near akin to these, may have been included in that general motive to apostasy, which is assigned by St. Paul. But, at least, these were not the forms under which the motive displayed itself; and we have no right to charge Demas with either cowardice or sluggishness. It was love of the world which caused this promising disciple to make shipwreck of "faith and a good conscience." He who could scorn danger, and endure hardship, could not withstand the blandishments of a world which plied him with its pleasures. His was accurately the case intended by our Lord: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God."

Observe, we pray you, this description. There is no hint given that the man did not betake himself in downright earnestness to the work; that he went to it reluctantly or feignedly. He has fairly "put his hand to the plough"—honestly, that is, enlisted himself in the cause of Christianity. But then he looks back, even as did Lot's wife,

when actually escaped from Sodom, and on the high road to Zoar. There is a secret hankering after what has been forsaken; the imagination is allowed to dwell on past indulgences; and then desire is excited, and the man stands ready to be carried by the first onslaught of temptation. It was thus, we may believe, with Demas. He was no hypocrite, he was no hireling—think not to escape the warning of his example by bringing against him such charges as these. But he suffered the world to tamper with his affections: he kept not watch over the heart, guarding its every avenue, lest the things of time and sense should steal in, and regain their ascendency. And, therefore, was he gradually seduced away from God. Perhaps at first he complied in what he thought trivial and unimportant things. He made concessions to custom and prejudice, and flattered himself that he was only avoiding unnecessary offence. But then, having once taken the ground of expediency, and brought himself within the tainted atmosphere, the graces of Christianity rapidly sickened, and all his former tastes and passions as rapidly revived. For a time, he may have made the desperate effort of serving two masters—an effort which never had, and never will have, but one termination: for since to serve God is to refuse to serve the world, it can only be in appearance that the two are served together; and the end must therefore be that the disguise will be thrown off, and the world assume visibly, what it has long had in reality, the undivided empire.

And thus with Demas. We know not after what degree of struggle and conflict, but finally, when the world and God came directly into competition, and it was no longer possible to keep up even the show of serving both, he made openly his election, and basely bartered eternity for time. Deplorable fall! What hardship could not do, what peril could

not do, this was effected by the allurements of a world whose God is "the prince of the power of the air;" and a man who had probably, at one time, been ready to undergo martyrdom, who would not have flinched from the apparatus of torture, failed in withstanding the seductions of pleasure, and was conquered by lust, after defying persecution. And be ye 'quite sure, it is not a world in arms, it is a world in smiles, which it is hardest to resist. There is a spirit in man which will struggle up against injustice and tyranny; and there is something fine, and exciting, and elevating in having to uphold an oppressed cause, and maintain the majesty of insulted truth. There is, moreover, the shame of deserting what we have sworn to defend; and this may do much towards keeping men faithful who would otherwise turn their backs. So then, ye might be stedfast in a day of martyrdom, and yet give way in an hour of blandishment. The world has better, more effective, engines than the rack, and the gibbet, and the wheel. It has pleasures, and riches, and honours; and with these it does most execution.

Be ye, therefore, watchful, ye who profess, and think, that you have separated yourselves from a world which "lieth in wickedness." For your admonition and for your warning has the instance of Demas been recorded. Ye have not given as great proof of sincerity as Demas. Ye have not been exposed to as great peril as Demas. Ye have not dared, nor done, so much as Demas for Christ. And, therefore, be not too sure that ye may not again be entangled by the world. Be not too sure that ye are proof against its baits, that ye cannot again be attracted by its shadows, nor allured by its braveries. Ye have no security but in constant prayer. in constant war; and it should make you more diligent than ever in supplication, and more vehement than ever in

resistance, to hear St. Paul say of Demas—Demas, who ministered to him in prison; Demas, whom he called his "fellow-labourer,"—"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

But now we would turn your thoughts from the progress which Demas must have made in Christianity to the advantages he enjoyed. We wish you to observe him not merely as forsaking St. Paul, but as forsaking him when that Apostle was on the very eve of martyrdom. We judge that this Second Epistle to Timothy, in which the apostasy of Demas is recorded, was composed shortly before the death of the Apostle, from expressions which it contains, indicating that St. Paul knew that the time of his departure was at hand. "For I am now ready to be offered. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." And what think you of having been the companion of St. Paul at such a time as this? We must all, perhaps, be ready to acknowledge that, if ever there were the Christian with whom it might be advantageous to associate, that Christian must have been St. Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles. Animated by an unquenchable zeal, and yet clothed with humility; of a lofty courage, invincible fortitude, unwearied charity, and, nevertheless, rich in all those lowlier, yet not less admirable, graces, which give warmth and consistency to the Christian character, St. Paul was a man whom it would seem impossible to have known without venerating, to have accompanied without imitating. There was all that fine heroism, and that beautiful chivalry, in this Apostle, which might be expected to constrain applause, even from those who regarded him as an enthusiast; whilst, where there was persuasion of his being the champion of truth, men

must have been at a loss which most to admire, the intrepid leader, who marshalled the conflict with a world's superstitions, or the meek disciple who wrought out his own "salvation with fear and trembling." We cannot imagine a greater privilege than the having been admitted to familiar intercourse with St. Paul. I think the coldest would have caught something of his fire; I think his zeal would have been electrical. I think that to have heard him preach to the Athenians would have nerved even the shrinking to contend against idols; to have marked his demeanour at the tribunal of Agrippa would have taught the oppressed that there may be liberty in chains; to have been with him during his labours as a tent-maker would have reconciled the poorest to toil and privation.

But it is not with St. Paul in the midst of an exciting conflict—the antagonist, and, almost, the conqueror of a world—that I could most long to have associated; it is with Paul the aged, Paul the prisoner of Jesus Christ. I would have been with him when he knew his death to be near, when the tyrant's fetters were already upon him, and the tyrant's sword was already half unsheathed. In the Roman dungeon, from which there was no prospect of his emerging, except to the Roman scaffold, there would I have been with the Apostle; there would I have observed him; there would I have communed with him; there would I have sat at his feet, eager to know what visions were floating before him, and to catch every word which might flow from his lips. And not from Moses upon Pisgah's top, gladdening himself in the moment of death with glimpses of the land which typified Heaven; not from Isaiah on the summit of Sion, calling up gorgeous and mystic forms from the tumultuous cloud of far-off days; not, perhaps, even from Peter and James and John, permitted to view, on the

heights of Tabor, the glories of the transfiguration—could I have gathered so much to animate, so much to humble, so much to inform, as from Paul in his captivity, from Paul on the eve of his martyrdom. Who can question that there came to him, in the solitudes of his prison, glorious visitations from the invisible world; that the consolations of God abounded towards him; and that, whilst the fetters were on the body, the spirit soared, as with an eagle's wing, and gazed on the inheritance that "fadeth not away?" Oh! to have been with him as he had to tell of the comforts and supports thus vouchsafed; to have stood by him as the soul came back from these sublime expatriations, laden, as it were, with the riches of Paradise! Who could have doubted the truth of Christianity; who could have felt otherwise than determined to adhere to its profession; who could have hesitated between its promises and any present advantage, with the prisoner Paul for his preacher, with the prisoner Paul for his evidence? Ah, be not too confident! It was the prisoner Paul whom Demas forsook. Forsook? Why, one would have thought that the common feeling of humanity would have kept him constant. To desert the old man in his hour of trial; to abandon him in his captivity, when there was, perhaps, no other to do him any kindly office; to leave him without a friend as the day of his martyrdom approached—who could be so ungenerous, so selfish, so dastardly? Ah, pronounce not a hasty judgment! Demas did this—Demas, who had, for a long time, been assiduous in ministering to the Apostle; and Demas did this only because, like many, too many, amongst ourselves, he "loved this present world." Learn ye, then, how weak are even extraordinary advantages when the heart is inclined to yield to the fascinations of the world; how

these fascinations may be said to steal away the heart, so that he who is enslaved by them loses, to all appearance, the best sensibilities of his nature.

We are quite aware that whilst with some, perhaps many, in the present day there is an undervaluing of the ordinance of preaching, with others there is an undue leaning on that ordinance, or, rather, on the individual to whom it is entrusted. There is a great deal which passes for attachment to Christian doctrine which is nothing else but attachment to a particular style of preaching; so that the cases are far from uncommon in which persons may be heard to say that they cannot listen with any profit except to this or that minister. Thus, according to their own account, their religion is virtually dependent on a particular instrument, rather than on that Spirit of God which gives to every instrument all its efficiency. Perhaps Demas thought that because he hearkened with a rapt attention to the Apostle, and felt his bosom glow as this man of God insisted on noble truths, and delivered sublime and touching and animating messages he was necessarily impregnated with the very spirit of Christianity, and bound too firmly to the cause of the Redeemer to be seduced or shaken by any common temptation. But the world gained an opportunity of plying Demas again with its seductions—an opportunity of which we may suppose it to have been partially deprived whilst he was much in the dungeon of St. Paul. And then was it seen what a mere thing of sand is the religion—if we may give it the name—which depends on a preacher for its warmth and its strength. For Demas fell away, though he had St. Paul to keep him stedfast—St. Paul when most rich in Christian experience, when closest in his intercourse with Heaven, and when his grey hairs and his bonds so appealed to

every sensibility that you would have thought desertion of the preacher impossible even had there ceased to be love for his doctrines.

Oh! the degrading, hardening, deadening tendency of an attachment to the world! It blunts the finest feelings; it withers what is generous; it extinguishes what is kindly; it shuts a man up in himself, and dries the springs of genuine sympathy with his fellow-men. And let no hearer henceforward think that because he may have delight in listening to the pathetic or powerful speech of a favourite minister he must be rooted in attachment to Christ and His religion. Let no minister henceforward think that because he has gained an influence over men's minds, he must have gained a hold on their hearts. The instance before us is full of warning to both—full of warning to the hearer, in that it shows him that he may be an apostate under the best preaching, ay, and that he shall be, if it be only the preaching which keeps him firm—full of warning to the minister, in that it tells him that he may be applauded and followed, and then deserted in his greatest need. Oh! hearer and minister may well both take an impressive lesson from the fact that St. Paul, when a prisoner, with the sword of Nero almost on his neck, could say of Demas—Demas, who had hung with rapture on his lips—Demas, whom his exhortations had nerved both to do and to suffer for Christ—"Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world."

And now we may suppose that enough has been said on the instance of Demas to certify you of the fatal character of that love of the world by which this once promising disciple was overcome. You can hardly consider the progress which Demas had made, the advantages which he enjoyed, and the circumstances in which he was

placed, without wondering that he should have been an apostate. There would seem to have been so much to keep him firm, that you are surprised he should have fallen. But, of course, the greater the cause for expecting constancy in Demas, the greater the proved power of love of the world, and the more emphatic the warning that you guard sedulously against it. But in what mode—for this is a question which here presses for an answer—in what mode may Christians hope to deliver themselves from love of the world? It is useless to show how fatal is the love, if we cannot also show how it may be wrestled with and subdued. And there is no denying that the world addresses itself very strongly to our affections, and that the correspondence which subsists between its objects and our natural desires gives its temptations a force which can hardly be exaggerated. Neither is there any hope of these temptations being resisted, unless love of the world be dispossessed by love of something better than the world. You will not cease to love the world—you will not grow weaker in attachment to the world—through the influence of any proof, however elaborate, that the world is not worth loving. Such is our constitution, that our affections must and will have a something to engage them. As to supposing that we can keep those affections wholly unemployed, it is to suppose an impossibility: they necessarily crave an object; and it would be quite idle to contend against an actual law of our nature.

And it is no part of the Christian system to leave the affections without an object. It only seeks to expel one affection by introducing another. If it be peremptory in requiring that there shall not be love of the world, it is earnest in requiring that there shall be love of God. And this is a process which may look to be successful. It is only

by fixing the affections on things above, that they can be withdrawn from things below. There may be weariness, there may be dissatisfaction, there may be even disgust with the vanities of earth; but, nevertheless, those vanities will occupy the heart unless displaced by the realities of Heaven. And what we would impress upon you is the importance of acting on the truth, that there must and will be a master-passion in the heart, and that there is no getting rid of one but by introducing another. It should, therefore, be your endeavour to set as much as possible Heaven against earth, eternity against time, and to strengthen in yourselves the persuasion that the objects of faith are incomparably more excellent than the objects of sense. If you really have this persuasion you will not love the world, simply because you will have discovered something better worth loving; and you will be in danger of relapsing into love of the world only through allowing this persuasion to be weakened.

You see, then, what you have to do. You have to meditate upon God and upon Heaven, striving to acquire higher and higher thoughts of Divine Majesty and future happiness. There is not one of you who will become a Demas if he keep Heaven much in mind. This is what we may call the receipt against apostasy. It is a receipt, not composed upon abstract and speculative opinions, but drawn from the known workings and pleadings of the heart —the heart which is sure to attach itself to what it feels to be a greater good, in preference to any lesser. Try this receipt, Christians who feel yourselves in danger of being again entangled by the world. Make the world look contemptible by putting it side by side with Heaven. Take into your hands what we may call the telescope of faith, and when the eye is dazzled

by near objects direct it to distant, whose brilliancy will throw every other into shade. But, at the same time, be very careful of any tampering with the world. Be careful not to fancy that you are proof against its temptations, and are therefore safe in venturing within the range of its seductions. In indifferent things, be always on the safe side. Better to be over-strict than not strict enough. Many have perished through what they have thought conciliation; none, we believe, through what the world has stigmatized as preciseness. And if you are inclined to exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" remember who hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and pray earnestly for that grace. Remember, moreover, that it is no trifle which is at stake. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Such is the authoritative decision of St. John; and what then can come to pass but that, if you allow the world to gain the ascendancy here, you will make yourselves outcasts from happiness for ever and ever?

SERMON XII

MICHAEL AND THE DEVIL

"Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."—JUDE 8, 9.

THERE is much mystery about this passage—not as to the fault which is denounced, the speaking evil of dignities; but as to the argument, or illustration, by which the said fault is exposed. The Apostle refers to some transaction in the invisible world, some dispute between spiritual intelligences—what was this transaction? what was this dispute between Michael and the devil about the body of Moses? We must not suppose that the whole may have been an imagination or a fable. We are not at liberty to doubt that a dispute actually took place: there must really be an Archangel, Michael; there must really be a fallen spirit, called the Devil: and between these two there must really have been such a contest as is dimly shadowed out in the passage before us. There are, we think, many points of high interest involved in this strange reference to a transaction in the invisible world, over and above the evidence furnished of the wrongness of speaking evil of dignities. As, however, it is with the distinct view of exposing this wrongness that St. Jude alludes to the transaction, we shall, of course, keep it in

mind, and endeavour so to construct our discourse as to make it bear upon the fact which is reprobated in our text. In the first place, then, let us endeavour to clear up, as much as may be, the several facts here alleged in regard of Michael and the devil: we will then, in the second place, consider more carefully the sin which is reproved by the example of the Archangel, the sin of those who "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities."

Now, that there is an invisible world, as well as a visible; that there are created beings higher and more powerful than ourselves, and not, like ourselves, compounded of matter and spirit—beings described in Scripture by the general name of angels—on these points we may assume your ready assent. You admit, also, on the authority of the Bible, that these beings are now divided into two great classes; those who have remained upright, and kept their first estate; and those who, having rebelled against God, were cast out from Heaven before the fall of man, and have since been engaged in endeavours to thwart the will of the Most High. Beyond these leading facts it is difficult to go—except that we are assured that the inhabitants of this earth are specially objects of contest to the two classes of spiritual intelligence—good angels being "ministering spirits" to the righteous; whilst evil angels continually labour to involve men in their fire and shame. This, as you must see, agrees exactly with the representation of our text, in which Michael is introduced as engaged in some contest with Satan, on behalf, evidently, of the peculiar people of God.

And now, as to what this contest may have been, the common opinion is plausible, and, possibly, correct. You remember the particular circumstances of the death of Moses. That great leader, debarred from entering the

promised land, in consequence of his conduct at the waters of Meribah, was commanded to ascend Mount Abarim, that there he might die, having first been permitted to look on the territory which the Israelites were to possess. And there Moses yielded up the ghost, with no human friend near to receive his last breath, or commit his body to the grave. But his remains were not neglected: God Himself took care of the body of His servant; for it is expressly recorded, "He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor; but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." There must have been some wise reason for this concealment of the body of Moses; and what so probable as that God, knowing the proneness of the Israelites to idolatry, and judging that the sepulchre of one so distinguished in their history as Moses would be, of all places, the most likely to be desecrated to superstitious practices, kept them from the temptation by hiding, in impenetrable secresy, the precise spot where the interment had been made? But, if this be admitted, then, though we are without any account of a contest between Michael and Satan, beyond that contained in the text, we may easily conjecture what the contest was, and how it originated. It may be supposed that the Archangel Michael had been commissioned by God to provide for the burial of Moses: it may further be supposed that the devil endeavoured to discover the body, as a means of enticing the Israelites to idolatry and superstition: and, from these suppositions, another will readily follow—that Michael had to withstand the devil in his endeavour, and that thus arose that conflict between the two which is referred to by St. Jude in our text. This, we say, is the more common, and, certainly, is a plausible explanation of the passage: it takes the body of Moses

literally, and shows thoroughly how that body may have been an object of dispute between a good angel and a bad.

And the conflict is not without interest and instruction for ourselves, if it were thus literally about "the body of Moses," as likely to be made to minister to idolatry and superstition. For it was hereby declared—and the sad experience of the Christian Church has but too well confirmed the declaration—that the relics of the righteous and the good might be abused to the very worst purposes; that they who, during life, had laboured, assiduously and successfully, to the bringing and the binding men to the service of God, might become, after death, through the proneness of the human mind to superstition and will-worship, instrumental to the withdrawing them from the purity and simplicity of religion. You all know how this takes place in the Roman Church—the veneration of relics being there carried to so absurd and pernicious a length, that it is one of the abuses against which the Reformed Church protests in her Articles. As with other errors of the Roman Church, you have here rather the corruption of a truth than the invention of a falsehood. There is, indeed, nothing unlawful in our viewing with peculiar interest the spot hallowed by the memory of a saint—the place, for example, where some illustrious confessor was born, or some martyr nobly died. I should not envy the Christianity of the man who was conscious of no high-wrought emotion on visiting scenes associated with the trials and triumphs of our faith—the stable of Bethlehem, the garden of Gethsemane, the hill of Calvary. Neither should I think the better of the piety of an individual who could look with indifference on what had belonged to a great champion of truth. The soldier kindles at the sight of the sword of some far-famed conqueror—why should not the Christian,

at the sight of the Bible of a Luther or a Wickliffe? We cannot make ourselves independent on such associations; neither is it to be desired that we should. The important thing is, that we keep these feelings within due bounds, and only cherish them so far as they lead to our admiring the manifestation of God's grace, and to our endeavouring to be "followers of those who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

And here the Roman Catholic Church has gone fatally astray. The relic is made a stumbling-block. The tomb of the saint becomes the altar of superstition. We have only to observe how the crowd of devotees will gather around some favourite shrine; what miraculous virtue they will attach to any thing reputed to have belonged to an eminent confessor; how they give what it is impossible to doubt is actual adoration to the cherished memorial; and we are indeed painfully taught how feelings, in themselves amongst the purest and best of our nature, require to be watched, and kept down, and denied: we understand why God should have withheld from the Israelites the knowledge of the place where their great leader lay, though it might only have seemed like the graceful expression of national thankfulness had they flocked, in long procession, to his tomb; yea, and yet further we understand why the devil should have so eagerly striven to discover the sepulchre, measuring his power once more with that of an unfallen spirit, and contending and disputing with Michael about the body of Moses.

But there may be another explanation of our text, and one which has perhaps greater Scriptural warrant. The third chapter of the Book of the Prophet Zechariah opens thus: "And he shewed me Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing

at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord [that is, the angel of the Lord just mentioned] said, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." Now what was the import of this vision? Why, the Jewish nation was then in great straits. The people, lately returned from captivity, had to encounter great difficulties in rebuilding their Temple, and re-establishing their polity. Prophets were raised up to encourage them. Visions were vouchsafed of so signal a glory arraying the second Temple as should make it far outshine the splendours of the first. The vision to which we refer is one of these. The High Priest, as representing the Jewish Church, is seen clothed "in filthy garments," to denote the abject and distressed condition in which that Church then was. On one side of the High Priest stands an angel—it may be the Archangel Michael: on the other side, Satan, for the express purpose, as it is stated, of resisting this angel of the Lord—the contest between the two being, evidently, about the Jewish Church, typified by Joshua, its chief officer. And the remarkable thing is that the good angel uses the very words which, in our text, are attributed to Michael—"The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan"—thus making it eminently probable that the dispute is the very one referred to by St. Jude.

But how, you will say, was this a dispute "about the body of Moses?" Not literally, but it may have been figuratively. The Christian Church is called "the body of Christ," who was "the Mediator of the new Covenant." Therefore might the Jewish Church be called "the body of Moses," who was the Mediator of the old Covenant. In this way, then, the two passages of Scripture exactly tally, and illustrate one the other. The

angel of the Lord, and Satan, standing, according to the vision of Zechariah, in attitudes of resistance, before Joshua the High Priest, are Michael and the devil, disputing, according to St. Jude, "about the body of Moses;" whilst both the Prophet and the Apostle ascribe the same words to the angel of the Lord—a proof of the justice of identifying the disputes. And blessed be God for every notice of angelic guardianship, whether of the Church or of an individual. We know—and a disheartening thing it is to know—that a great spiritual adversary, "the accuser of the brethren," is ever labouring to effect our destruction, injecting evil thoughts, placing obstacles and temptations in our way, and arraying against us whatsoever combined subtlety and strength, set on by indomitable malice, can suggest for hindering final salvation. But this great adversary is not without antagonists—antagonists exactly fitted for the conflict, forasmuch as they are beings of the very same nature, but possessing that nature in its first power of purity. Good angels contend with evil, and the object in dispute is your soul and mine. Precious things must these souls be, though men seem ready to barter them for the veriest bauble, when those high conflicts, which are continually going on between spiritual intelligences—between embattled Cherubim an the hosts of darkness—are for their ruin or their rescue. Let it help to teach us the worth of the soul, that the loftiest orders of creation struggle for it as for an inestimable prize. Dread to throw away that which is the object of so intense, though so mysterious a dispute. And if, on the one hand, it might almost make you despair of saving the soul, to know the power of the beings leagued to destroy it; on the other, let it fill you with hope, to hat there are more with you than there are against

you; that "greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." "Ye," saith St. Paul, "are the body of Christ, and members in particular." And "the body of Christ" shall assuredly be no less an object of eager dispute than was "the body of Moses." Evil angels will assail you: evil angels will watch for your halting. But "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him." God "shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." And if ye will but second good angels—second them by disputing, in God's strength, with yourselves, with your corrupt tendencies, appetites, affections—the devil shall be beaten back; the soul shall escape "as a bird out of the snare of the fowler;" and in the enemy's discomfiture, and your deliverance, shall be read the emphasis and the power of the majestic imprecation, "The Lord, even the Lord, rebuke thee, O Satan!"

And now, as to the manner in which the Archangel carried on the dispute, and, therefore, the reproof which this manner conveyed to such as "spake evil of dignities." This is what St. Jude charges on the false teachers—the speaking evil of dignities. Dignities were persons of rank and authority, kings, magistrates, rulers, whether in Church or State. These rulers might be either good or bad: did St. Jude mean to blame the speaking evil of dignities in both cases, or only in that in which the rulers were bad? Undoubtedly, in both cases. Else there would be no point in the example of Michael; for it was the devil against whom Michael "durst not bring a railing accusation." So that it must have been evil speaking where the party spoken of was the base and the wicked, which the Apostle wished to reprove and denounce. Indeed, the speaking evil of a good ruler is so manifestly disgraceful and sinful that even those

who do it will hardly defend it. But when the superior is wicked, and grossly abuses his authority, may we not then "speak evil of dignities?" If we cannot say worse of them than they deserve, can it be wrong to speak the truth? And yet "the dignities," during the times of the Apostles, were for the most part the scourge and disgrace of humankind. What monsters were the chief "dignities," the Emperors of Rome!—men who seemed only tolerated by Providence, that by their vices and atrocities they might punish the sins of nations and of Churches. This will always give a peculiar character to the precepts as to loyalty and submission to constituted authority which abound in the New Testament. These precepts were delivered when there was everything to make loyalty difficult and resistance seem excusable; when the king to be honoured was odious by every enormity, the magistrate to be obeyed despicable by extortion, injustice, and violence; and hence it must necessarily be concluded that the precepts enjoin respect for the office, independently of the qualities or the acts of the party by whom it is borne. The ruler is in every case the vicegerent of God. "The powers that be are ordained of God."

This is evidently the gist of the instance of Michael. Against whom may "a railing accusation" be brought if not against the devil? Yet it was the devil of whom Michael would not speak evil; and this forbearance of the Archangel is mentioned as condemning the evil speaking against which St. Jude wrote. What, then, could this evil speaking be, if not the speaking evil of those who were evil? Ah! what a lesson does this give to many who are but too ready to say with those mentioned by the Psalmist, "Our lips are our own, who is Lord over us?" There are many kinds, degrees, and objects of

evil speaking. We may speak evil of one another, of our inferiors, of our equals; and Scripture has its lesson against every case against slander, detraction, and all sins of the tongue; but it is a very particular case which is reprobated in our text, yet one which it is not difficult to find amongst ourselves. How readily do we launch invectives against persons in authority, even if those persons are admirable in character! If we do not like their measures how lavish are we of our satire and upbraiding! In place of considering that their office should always secure them respectful treatment, the condemnation of silence when we are unable to approve, we seem to regard them as public property on whom we may vent our spleen and shower our revilings. Partly, perhaps, it is the result of free institutions, which seem to require as little hindrance as possible to the expression of the popular mind; but it must strike a student of the Bible as strangely discordant, not merely from its spirit, but even from its letter, that they who profess godliness, as well as they who are indifferent to religion, seem to think themselves privileged to say the severest things of persons in authority. And why not? some are ready to exclaim. Would you have us tongue-tied? Would you restrain the expression of that public opinion which is verily the defence and safety-valve of society? Nay, my brethren, it is not I who am delivering a sentiment, or laying down a principle; it is the Bible which in distinct terms denounces the speaking evil of dignities, even when those dignities had abused their trust and failed in their duty. I do but suggest the appearance of discrepancy between what the Bible prescribes, and that licence of tongue in regard of those who bear rule, which evidently allows of no respect for office.

The more you study Scripture, the more will you perceive what importance is attached to sins of the tongue. One of our divines very truly says that the spiritual physician as well as the bodily must look at his patient's tongue, if he would judge his state of health. When St. Paul reckons up the sins of the last times, "evil speakers" have place in the black catalogue. The same Apostle includes "backbiters" amongst those given up "to a reprobate mind." Christ himself says that "evil speakings" "proceed from the heart;" and He mentions them in the same breath with "murders, adulteries, false witness." Ah! where are many of our polished scandalmongers, our clever satirists, our insidious triflers with the good names of others, if such are the laws by which judgment will be given? But the case now before us is a different one. It is a case in which the tongue seems to have every excuse for giving itself licence. If evil be spoken, it is still truth which is spoken; and is not truth to be spoken? Nay, not always. I may know something to my neighbour's disadvantage; but it may not become me to send it through the parish, whether by the open announcement or the mysterious hint. In some cases, indeed, it may be my duty, it may be required by my office and place, that I denounce and expose the sin; and then I may take St. Jude himself as my example, and not hesitate to call things by their right names. This Apostle had no scruple in using severe terms when he had to reprove evil speakers. He calls them "filthy dreamers," "spots in the feasts of charity," "raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own dishonour." Was he then doing the very thing for which he reproved others? Not so, forasmuch as he had authority to rebuke, whereas they whom he rebuked rebuked those in authority. This made

the sin. For anything which appears to the contrary, "the dignities" were evil in character; but then there was a sacredness in office, and they who could not speak well of them in reference to character, were bound, at least, to keep silence, out of reverence to office.

You see, then, where the sin lay—not in bearing false witness, for Michael could hardly have done this with regard to the devil unless he had spoken good of him—but in forgetting the respect due to office whilst giving vent to indignation at character. St. Paul had called the High Priest a "whited wall," not knowing him for the High Priest; but, so soon as told, he exclaims, "I wist not, brethren, that he was the High Priest; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people." And you are to consider whether the sin thus defined be not of frequent commission amongst ourselves. For my own part, when one hears with what unbridled freedom those in authority are commented on, how unscrupulously they are abused and even vilified, whenever their acts fail to secure them approval; with what utter want of reverence rulers are treated, unless their method of ruling commend itself to popular favour—ay, and that, too, by persons who profess submission to the maxims of Christianity—indeed, one feels it hard to determine how numbers are to be exculpated from St. Jude's charge of "speaking evil of dignities," remembering how he illustrates the sin by showing it to have been that avoided by the Archangel Michael, who, disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, "durst not bring against him a railing accusation."

There is yet another point, which will probably have occurred to you, as we reasoned from the example of Michael, to the sinfulness of "speaking evil of dignities." If we reasoned rightly, the sin resulted, in great measure,

from the elevated position of the party of whom evil was spoken—there being a respect due to office, even when it is impossible to feel any for character. But how does this hold good in the case of Michael and the devil? What dignity, what office, had the devil, which could be construed as a reason why an archangel should be withheld from speaking of him with a scorn and a severity commensurate with his wickedness? We can only suppose—if we would not strip the example in the text of precision and power—that the devil was originally of the very highest rank in creation—the equal to Michael if not his superior. It was "the speaking evil of dignities" which Michael avoided. Then the devil must have been a "dignity" in regard even of Michael; and this he may have been as created, "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Fallen he was, degraded and darkened by wickedness; but Michael remembered his glorious rank, his magnificent station and endowment; and thus the example was most apposite; for the thing to be inculcated was respect for place or office, in spite of utter unworthiness of character; and there could not be an example more precisely in point than that of an archangel restrained from railing at the devil by remembering the devil's rank in the creation of God.

But if this be the just exposition of the passage, then I know not that, in the whole range of Scripture, there is so striking, so formidable a description of Satan as is thus furnished by the quiet and meek "The Lord rebuke thee" of the Archangel Michael. We can but gather that the Almighty had formed no creature superior to Satan. He was no inferior spirit, of lower capacities and powers, who, seized, we might have thought, with envy of creatures more brilliantly equipped than

himself, rushed into apostasy, in the vain hope of rising to their rank. He probably had none above him but God; and it must have been the Divine glory itself at which he aimed in daring to rebel. Oh, what a fall! the topmost being in creation—the being against whom when fallen even an archangel "durst not bring a railing accusation," lest he should "speak evil of dignities"— this being, turned into the bitter enemy of God, and applying his inconceivable sagacity and strength to the destruction of man! If anything can fill us with a wholesome fear of the devil, with a proper sense of the dangers to which we must be exposed through his power and malice, it will be such an exhibition as this of his original glory and greatness.

There are many who make nothing or little of the devil, as though they would doubt his existence, or at least despise him as an adversary. Why, this is virtually that "speaking evil" of the devil which Michael so scrupulously shunned. This is the so speaking of him as to forget or contradict his having been formed with every power and perfection that creatureship could admit. Ah! this is "the evil speaking" which the devil likes. He is willing that we should deny or decry him; for he is never so sure of us as his prey as when we despise him as our enemy. Our security is to have, as the archangel had, an abiding sense of the vast power of Satan. Then, as it was also with the archangel, we shall refer to God as alone able to repress and subdue so terrible an opponent. "The Lord rebuke thee"—it is a species of prayer. An archangel prays against the devil—shall we, shall you and I, do less? Shall we meet him in our own strength; shall we withstand him in our own wisdom? God forbid! "The Lord rebuke thee, Oh, Satan"—be this our constant

and our fervent petition. And wheresoever there is the wholesome fear and the earnest prayer, assuredly there shall come in due time the accomplishment of that blessed and beautiful promise, "God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." The devil may dispute with Michael, but angels shall convey the soul into the heavenly presence, and even the body of the saint shall "rest in hope," hidden, as it were, by God; for as "the body of Moses" was reserved for the day of the transfiguration, so shall his be for the day of resurrection.

SERMON XIII

THE FOLLY OF EXCESSIVE LABOUR

"If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct."—ECCLES. x. 10.

THE first meaning of these words is so obvious as scarcely to require the being pointed out. A man is engaged with some manual occupation, using an iron instrument, such as an axe or a chisel. The nature of his business tends to blunt the tool with which he works, so that after proceeding for some time, he is not only fatigued with his labour, but less able to prosecute it through the diminished efficiency of his instrument. Under these circumstances, he might put out more strength, endeavouring to supply by the exertion of greater force the loss resulting from the imperfection of the tool. But it is easily seen that this method would not answer. He would only be rapidly exhausting his already tasked powers; whilst his continuing to use the blunted instrument would only blunt it more, so that he must soon be compelled to give up the work in despair. Whereas, if he would cease a little while from his toil, and use the ordinary and known methods for sharpening his tool, all his difficulties might be overcome, and he would carry on his trade with both ease and success. So profitable is wisdom to direct—the brute force would be presently exhausted, if there were no skill in its management; but let there be

only a due share of prudence and science, and strength might be so used as to surmount every obstacle. If the iron be blunt, and a man refuse, or neglect, to whet the edge, he must, of necessity, increase the amount of force which he applies; and it is not possible, with a nature constituted as is ours, that such a system should long be of any avail. But if, so soon as he perceives that the instrument grows blunt, he will bring it to the grinding stone, and give it a new edge, he may expect, through this wise husbandry of his own strength, to accomplish what he wishes, and greatly to prosper in his labour.

Such is evidently, we think, the drift of the statement under review; and this having been ascertained and admitted we proceed to furnish those illustrations of the principle which is brought before us, and to the drawing those inferences, which we may judge at once the most pertinent and the most practical.

Now it must often have struck you as a very surprising feature in God's dealings with this earth, that though He has abundantly stored it with all necessary for the purposes and comforts of civilized life He has left the discovery and employment of such material dependent on human industry and ingenuity. We do not know, for example, that He gave any instruction to the first fathers of our race as to agriculture or handicraft: we have rather reason to believe that He left them, as He has left their descendants, to learn by experience the uses and properties of different substances, and to determine by successive trials the best method of turning them to account. We are quite aware that many of the most valuable productions of nature, and which we even now reckon amongst the necessaries of life, are not attainable in any shape except through dint of vast labour, nor available to our

wants until subjected to curious and elaborate processes. The very metal, iron, which is mentioned in our text, and to deprive the world of which would be to threaten it with starvation, with what toil is it wrung from the bowels of the earth, and under how much costly and curious operation must it pass ere it can come to the husbandman in the form of a spade or a plough! God has nowhere instructed man where to find, nor how to prepare iron: He has only furnished man with faculties for discovering, placed him under circumstances favouring, or rather requiring, the development of those faculties; and then has left him to his own industry and ingenuity, placing a sure reward within reach, if he will make full use of communicated powers.

And how marvellously has discovery gone on from age to age! How have new properties been ascertained, new resources unfolded, new virtues established; so that every century—we might almost say, every year—has witnessed an addition to human conveniences and comforts, an addition which has resulted from the detection of some fresh power in nature, or from the fresh application of some already known law. We read of Tubal Cain, the seventh in descent from Adam, that he was "the instructor of every artificer in brass and iron." The human race was then vastly on the increase; and it had become a matter of great importance to it, that there should be such improvements in husbandry as could not be effected without the use of metals; and industry and ingenuity had been so turned on discoveries and inventions, whilst the necessity was only beginning to be felt, that they were ready with implements and arts when that necessity began to be urgent. And we believe that this has been the order of things from the earliest

days downwards. We believe that God, who has appointed labour as man's inheritance because best adapted to a state of moral discipline, has also crowned labour with such measures of success as should just meet existing wants, but not supersede the necessity for fresh efforts. This is wonderfully observable in regard of all those surprising inventions and improvements which have multiplied human power beyond all calculation. The mighty steam-engine, which now does with ease what would have required and baffled an army; the machine, which a child can manage, and which effects the work of a thousand hands—these have practically no tendency to produce idleness, nor even distress—on the contrary, they are but means through which industry is enabled to meet increased demands; and every man is busier though the vapour and the wheel have apparently taken his business on themselves.

This is a very beautiful and striking arrangement of Divine Providence. Man is allowed to acquire prodigious powers; and those powers are augmenting with such amazing rapidity that one hardly dares to surmise what they may be in a few more years. But nevertheless, through some mysterious ordering of God, these powers are never more than commensurate with the demand: employment grows with every discovery which you might have thought likely to encourage idleness if not make it inevitable. So that—and this is the first point of view under which we desire to present our text—there is an extraordinary display of the carefulness and wisdom of God in those arrangements through which practically industry and discovery are made to go hand in hand. If nothing had been left to human invention, but all the arts and manufactures of civilized life had

been matter, from the first, of explicit revelation, it may well be supposed that the mind of man would have grown listless, through want of sufficient stimulus on its powers. And hence it has been a most merciful appointment that man has been so circumstanced as to be compelled to use his faculties; that he has been necessitated to search out methods for sharpening the blunted edge of the iron. But then it might have been feared, and expected, that, as discovery grew, and nature gave up to human search her secrets and powers, there would cease to be a sufficient demand upon labour, so that man would escape from that most wise and benevolent ordinance, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." If in the early days of our race man's progress in useful arts could have been foreseen; if his course could have been traced, as he advanced from the rude instrument which could scarce turn the clod, to the varied and powerful implements which now make the valley and mountain obedient to his wants—from the simple contrivances which just shielded him from the elements, to the wonder-working machines which make those elements his servants, and scatter over a land the clothing of its thousands—why, the prognostication must have been, that so vast an increase in power would bring with it an indisposition to exertion, and that men, thus enabled to avail themselves of a ministry of overpassing might, would settle into an indolence fatal to all moral greatness.

But God has taken care to defeat such prognostications. He has provided, as we have shown you, that the progress of discovery should only keep pace with the progress of population; that wants should multiply just as fast as the means of supply; and that thus idleness should be no more at men's option, when

they have pressed into their service all the agencies of nature, than when they stood alone on the earth, ignorant of the simplest properties, and not having developed the most ordinary resources. We look on all this as singularly indicative of God's wisdom and goodness in His providential arrangements. To bring the matter under the imagery of our text—He might have afforded man no means of whetting the edge; and then man, compelled to "put to more strength," must have spent his days in the worst drudgery; and there could never have been constructed the goodly fabric of a diversified community. On the other hand, He might have given man such a power of whetting the edge, as would have destroyed all necessity for his putting out his strength; and then there must have followed that universal dissoluteness, which would necessarily be the produce of universal idleness. But God has guarded equally against both these disastrous results. The edge may be so whetted that man's strength shall not be over-tasked: it cannot be so whetted that man's strength is no longer needed. Wonderful then art Thou, O God, in Thine every appointment! I see all that is worthy of Thee in the ordinance which demands human industry! I see all that is worthy of Thee in the limits which have been set to human discovery. And I extract nothing but cause for admiring and adoring Thee in Thy dealings with our race, from meditation on this simple but comprehensive appointment, "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct."

Now, up to this point, we have taken a very general view of our text, but one, we think, which has enabled us to survey Divine Providence under a most interesting aspect.

We will now bring before you more precise illustrations of the passage, but still under such forms as may best excite you to observe and praise the benevolence of God.

It is the property—we might rather say, the infirmity—of man, that he cannot give himself incessantly to labour, whether bodily or mental, but must have seasons of relaxation and repose. The iron will grow blunt after having been a certain time used; and if a man will then go on persisting in the using it, there must be a desperate putting forth of strength, which is certain ere long to bring about its total prostration. But if he have wisdom to direct him, so that by a lawful recreation he duly whet the edge of his powers, he may, through God's help, long retain his strength and his usefulness. And however, in general, there may be more cause for fear that men will be too inert than too active, we are well persuaded of the frequency of cases, in which the caution most needed is, that men "whet the edge."

You are all aware of the obligation that men should devote themselves to various callings, and of the truth that they are all equally serving the Lord Christ when engaged in the diligent performance of their several duties. And we now speak of the duty, that, in pursuing their respective avocations, they take care not to overwork their powers, and thus entail upon themselves a premature debility. We believe that such a caution is far enough from out of place in a community like our own, where there is such vast play for mercantile activity, where one man may be said to urge on another by the boldness of his enterprise, or the hardihood of his speculations. I do not believe that philosophy with all its mystery, nor theology with all its majesty, is more likely than commerce so to engross, and work up, the mind as to produce

rash disregard of the consequences of excessive labour. And we, therefore, derive for all classes a lesson from our text, the lesson that it is as much their duty to relax when they feel their strength overtasked, as it is to persevere whilst that strength is sufficient. It may be duty to work with the iron whilst it is not blunt: but it is equally duty to pause and "whet the edge" when the bluntness is apparent.

And we cannot refrain from pointing out to you with what tender consideration God hath provided intervals of repose, and so made it emphatically a man's own fault if he sink beneath excessive labour. What a beautiful ordinance is that of day and night! How speedily would men exhaust themselves, if they were not compelled to the taking rest in sleep! God has not left it altogether optional with man whether or not he will whet the edge of the iron: He forces him, as it were, to his pillow; and that pillow, with all its softness, acts as the grindstone on which the blunted powers regain their acuteness. Then, what a gracious appointment is that of the Sunday! We might almost say that there were, comparatively, little or no fear of a man's injuring himself by over-labour, if he rigidly abstracted one day in seven, and devoted it to the duties of religion. We may not doubt that it is in no sense an arbitrary division of time, that which makes every seventh day, rather than every third, or every tenth day, a Sunday. We must rather believe that God has herein had accurate respect to the powers of the human machine, and that the repose of one day in seven is exactly what is needed to their being kept in healthful play. This is true, even if you set aside the religious uses of the Sunday and consider only the secular advantages which its institution insures. For we believe, as we have already

hinted, that where the Sunday is duly observed, there will seldom occur the case of exhausted and overwrought powers. But, on the other hand, where the Sunday has been neglected, where men have made all the seven days days of anxiety and labour, we can point to instances as notorious as they are melancholy of so rapid a derangement, and then so total an overthrow, of the whole mental system, that the grave has been soon dug, or the madhouse soon entered.

I doubt whether any cause have made more suicides or maniacs than the making the seventh day a day of business as well as the other six. And we have our fears that there is more of this in our community than appears on the surface. There is a vast deal of what may be called private Sabbath-breaking. Many a tradesman who closes his shop on the Sunday perhaps, opens his ledger — the Sunday is the day on which systematically, he casts up his accounts, and makes out his bills. And there is moreover a vast deal of what may be called mental Sabbath-breaking. The merchant, though he deserts the counting-house and the Exchange, takes no pains to dismiss his commerce from his thoughts. On the contrary, he perhaps encourages himself in meditating, and draws others into conversing, on the state of the money-market, or the prospects of trade; and thus is his mind still kept on the fret, and allowed no season of thorough refreshment. So that now we can follow up our statements as to the necessity and duty of whetting the edge of the iron, by showing you that God has had such gracious respect to your constitution and wants, that it is only by deliberately setting yourselves against His most sacred appointments, that you can run much risk of so blunting as to injure the instrument. We can lay down

no general rules as to the degree in which business may be extended, and the quantity of labour which a man may safely undertake. But we may, at least, assert this great principle, that a man has too much of worldly employment on his hands if it at all require him to make a working-day of the Sunday; and that he is too much engrossed with his trade if he cannot forget it on the Sunday, and cease during a few sacred hours to calculate and speculate.

And, certainly, there is no excuse to be found for any one of you, who may so strain as to weaken his powers, or labour in such undue measure as must rapidly debilitate him for future exertion, when every seventh day gives him at once warning and opportunity—warning that he is so constituted as to need periods of total cessation from secular employment, and opportunity of enjoying such cessation. God has done all that could be done to prevent that ordinance of labour, which He designed to be in every sense wholesome, from becoming in any sense injurious, seeing that, over and above the refreshing alternations of day and night, He has appointed a division of time which continually reminds you, with eloquent persuasiveness, that "if the iron be blunt, and a man do not whet the edge, there must be put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct."

Yes, beloved brethren, the man who spends the Sunday religiously, remembering that it is God's day, and, therefore, striving to devote it to God's service, necessarily abstracts his mind from secular cares, and thus allows it to recover its tone and elasticity, which must gradually be destroyed under one uniform pressure. And, far more than this, in studying the Scriptures, meditating on Heaven, attending the ministrations of the sanctuary, praying

with all fervency, and perhaps visiting the sick and the dying, how is he securing for himself fresh supplies of grace which will strengthen him for the duties and the trials of the week. The repose of spirit, the glimpses of eternity, the sober and faithful review of his conduct, the renewal of the consecration of himself to God—all these, which are specially appropriate to the Sabbath, in the shape either of duty or of privilege, tend manifestly to prepare him for so using the world as not to abuse it, for the so pursuing his earthly calling as to be neither too much engrossed by its attractions, nor distracted by its solicitudes. And many is the man who can give as his experience that the Sabbath has come to him as a delicious calm after the din and bustle of an excited week; and that, after employing this hallowed day in communion with God, and the diligent use of appointed means of grace, he has found himself enabled to return to his ordinary duties with invigorated powers; and the perplexities of the Saturday have disappeared before the improved strength of the Monday. The iron was blunted, and, if he had attempted to proceed without interruption in his labour, he must have put to more strength, and thus have rapidly disabled himself for fulfilling his duties. But he possessed that "wisdom which is profitable to direct"—the wisdom which is from above—and this taught him to withdraw himself, at God's bidding, from earthly concerns, and to forget time in his anxiety for eternity.

And he has found a present reward, as he shall do a future. Divine grace has come down, and in animating him with the hope full of immortality, has quickened him for the discharge of every present duty. He has been in contact with heavenly things, and the attrition has

sharpened him even for earthly occupations; so that when the iron has been brought again into use, its edge has been so keen that what seemed adamantine can be chiselled, and what indivisible cleft. And, without confining attention to the sharpening influence of a well-spent Sunday, we may affirm generally that there is a power in religion which make it a man's best auxiliary in the performance of every-day duties. Look, for example, at prayer, that religious act which is possible at all times and in all places; for inasmuch as prayer is the heart speaking to God, at what moment may it not be offered? from what spot is it excluded? And if a man's habit be that of prayer, so that in every undertaking, difficulty, or emergence, his mind turns almost naturally to God, who can deny the likelihood of his being so directed, and strengthened, and comforted, that it shall be all the same as it would be with the artisan whose blunted tool should be suddenly sharpened and given fresh into his hands when he was tempted to throw it by as unfit for use? There is a whetting of the edge by relaxation, and of that we have already spoken; there is a whetting it also by religion, and of this we now speak. And we can be confident that, where there is the wisdom which is profitable to direct, a man will find his powers made equal to his duties, and that, too, through his continued seeking that they may be strengthened from above. In many a moment of difficulty, under many a perplexing circumstance, the true Christian asks of God counsel and courage, and finds himself enabled to determine wisely and to act firmly. He may have time for nothing but a silent ejaculation; but that throws him on the assistance of God. He may be only just able to remember and plead a promise in prayer; but the bringing his mind into contact with a Divine promise is vir-

tually the bringing the iron to the whetstone, and the keener edge is the instant attestation to the power of the process.

Put away from among you as a perilous delusion the thought that you are, in any sense, sufficient of yourselves for any of those duties which are required from you as probationers for eternity. You are complete in Christ—you are nothing out of Christ. "I can do all things," said the great Apostle, "through Christ that strengtheneth me;" but the whole of his writings breathe equally the confession, I can do nothing if I trust in myself. Be this then the maxim of each amongst us; and let our practice accord with our profession, so that for every duty we may seek help through a Mediator, and expect Heaven as the purchase only of His merits. Make you trial of this, and you shall find that the iron, worn though it be and tarnished, is wrought into weapons effectual in the spiritual warfare, till at length what has been of keen edge enough to carve a path through a thousand foes, shall be found bright enough for the presence of God, though in that presence shall be nothing which reflects not His image.

SERMON XIV

ST. PAUL AT PHILIPPI

"And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely; who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks."—ACTS xvi. 23, 24.

THERE are few Scriptural narratives with which men are, for the most part, better acquainted than with that of the conversion of the jailer at Philippi. The very striking circumstances of the case—the praises of God hymned by Christian preachers at midnight and in prison; the earthquake which seemed the answer of the Lord to the voices of His servants; the terror of the jailer when he awaked from his sleep; the cry of St. Paul, which prevented his committing suicide; his springing in trembling; his falling down before Paul and Silas, and exclaiming, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the memorable answer, in words which are perhaps more frequently quoted than any in the Bible, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"—these circumstances are all eminently calculated to arrest the attention and to fix the story very deeply in our memories. But we desire, on the present occasion, to lead you to consider the narrative with an especial reference to the conduct of St. Paul. Ordinarily, perhaps, the jailer occupies the more prominent place; but it is the deportment of the Apostle on which we propose fixing the chief of your attention; for there are as we think certain truths derivable from this

which may be easily overlooked, but not without great detriment to the beauty and instructiveness of the story. Come, then, with us to Philippi. St. Paul has raised up enemies by healing a damsel possessed with a spirit of divination: he is, in consequence, dragged before the rulers, who are disposed to side with the infuriated populace: come, and let us observe the demeanour of the great Apostle, and then, following him into prison, consider what facts are incidentally made known by the history before us.

Now there are two occasions, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, on which Roman magistrates directed that St. Paul should be scourged or "beaten with rods." The one was the occasion before us—"They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans." The other was when the Apostle had arrived for the last time at Jerusalem, and the whole city was moved against him as an enemy to the law and the Temple. On this occasion the scourging, though ordered, was not inflicted. "As they bound him with thongs, St. Paul said to the Centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?" This appeal to his rights as a Roman citizen produced an immediate effect: the chief captain was afraid when he heard that he was a Roman, and treated him at once with greater consideration and forbearance. And now we want you to observe how differently St. Paul acted on these two occasions, though at first sight there is no reason why he should not have pursued the same course in both. In either case he was in the power of authorities disposed to treat him in an illegal manner. In either case, had he chosen, he might have urged the same plea: he was a Roman citizen at Philippi, just as much as at Jerusalem; and the

magistrates of the one city, like the chief captain in the other, would not have dared to command him to be scourged had they known him to be a Roman. But at Jerusalem he turned the chief captain from his purpose by pleading his rights, whereas at Philippi he kept the fact of his citizenship concealed from the magistrates, and suffered them, without the slightest remonstrance, to execute their illegal and tyrannical purpose. Nay, he did plead his citizenship at Philippi, but not—and this is the singular thing—till too late to prevent the scourging. When the magistrates sent the sergeants in the morning to direct the release of Paul and Silas, Paul peremptorily refused to leave the prison in so private a manner. He uses his citizenship to extort a kind of apology from the magistrates, though he would not use it to prevent their committing an illegal act. "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being Romans; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay, verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out." I do not know anything in the conduct of St. Paul which at first sight is stranger than this. In order to humble the magistrates he states a fact, which, had he stated it at first, would have prevented the injury. You may be sure that some weighty reason must have existed for his silently submitting to be scourged when a word would have prevented it. We may well be arrested by this silence of St. Paul: we may well feel that there is something expressive in this silence: let us pause therefore and consider what is the best explanation to be given of the fact, that though St. Paul kept his citizenship in mind—for he used it afterwards as though to punish the magistrates—yet he suppressed all mention of it, when it would have saved him from suffering shame, when it would have withheld the magistrates from beating

him with many stripes, and thrusting him ignominiously into prison.

Now it is impossible to say in what degree Divine intimations were given to the Apostles as to what scenes of labour they were to enter, or what victories they were about to achieve. But it is evident that they had frequently instruction from above as to how they should proceed, instruction which might be considered as immediate revelation. Thus when Paul was at Troas a vision appeared to him in the night: "There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us." The interpretation put upon this vision is given by the historian, "Immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the Gospel unto them." It was the same at Corinth. Paul was admonished, in a vision, to continue labouring in Corinth, for, said the Lord, "I have much people in this city." In like manner, may we not suppose that it was divinely revealed to St. Paul that he should be employed in converting the jailer and his household? Whilst he was under the hands of the magistrates, and whilst a word as to his citizenship would have saved him from scourging and imprisonment, he may have known, from Divine intimation, that a great purpose was to be subserved through his submitting quietly to ignominy and wrong; and therefore was he silent. By pleading his citizenship he would indeed have preserved himself from stripes and a dungeon; but then he would have lost the opportunity of acting on the jailer; and we believe that, as God told him of his having much people in Corinth, he also told him of his having a family in the prison, whom he should deliver from a worse than Egyptian captivity.

And if you examine attentively the circumstances of the narrative, you can hardly fail to think that St. Paul was all along aware of what God designed, so that he acted throughout under the distinct expectation that his imprisonment was to be subservient to the conversion of the jailer. You find it stated that, in consequence of the special injunctions received from the magistrates, the jailer thrust Paul and Silas "into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." Hence it would seem that the Apostle was placed in a part of the building remote from that which the jailer himself occupied: indeed it may be doubted whether the jailer was under the same roof at all, whether the house in which he lived was not detached from the prison. You read, "At midnight Paul and Silas sang praises unto God." Then it is added, "And the prisoners heard them" —the prisoners, you observe, not the jailer. Paul and Silas were in "the inner prison;" but their voices could reach the other parts of the building, and the captives were roused by sounds so unwonted in their dreary abode. It is hardly to be supposed that the jailer would not have heard these sounds, as well as the prisoners, had he not been at a greater distance from the Apostle. Then came the great earthquake, shaking the foundations of the prison, throwing open all the doors, and loosening all the bonds. The jailer could not sleep through this: he started instantly up, and seeing the prison doors open, concluded that all the prisoners had fled. It is very evident from this that he was lodged where he could see the prison doors, but not the prisoners: he was on the outside of the building which contained the criminals committed to his charge. Without staying to assure himself that the prisoners had fled—for it seemed a matter of course that an

opportunity to escape would be immediately seized—the jailer drew his sword, and would have killed himself, had not Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here."

But how came the Apostle to know what the jailer was about to do? He was at a distance from him, as we have sufficiently proved: there were dark passages between them; for though the jailer was able to see that the prison doors were open, he was obliged to call for a light before he could make his way to the inner prison where Paul and Silas were; and, nevertheless, the Apostle knew all that was passing: he knew that the jailer was about to kill himself; he knew he was moved to this by the persuasion that the prisoners had fled; so that, had he been in the room with the jailer, in place of being at such a distance that the voice of prayer and praise could not reach his apartment, he could not have been more accurately aware of the effect produced by the earthquake. Does not this prove that St. Paul was divinely informed of what was passing in the mind of the jailer, so that there was going on a series of revelations in regard of the great work of his conversion; so that the Apostle was not acting indefinitely, with no express object, through this eventful day and night, but rather, all along, had his eye directed to a mighty triumph which, through his instrumentality, Christianity was about to achieve? And this at once explains why, in opposition to what might have been expected, he studiously kept silence on his rights as a citizen of Rome, when their mention would have saved him from scourging and imprisonment. Scourging and imprisonment! Why, these were to be the very means through which the Gospel was to work one of the noblest of its achievements: these were

to bring him into contact with a household which would hearken to the word of everlasting life, and become conspicuous to all ages as a monument of the power of grace.

Shall he then shun the stripes and the dungeon? Is this a case in which it may become him to disarm persecution, as he afterwards disarmed it at Jerusalem? Nay, persecution must then have been dear to him. He would not, for all the riches of the world, have uttered the few words which would have spread consternation through his enemies, and have secured for himself protection and respect. A Roman citizen indeed I am, he may have whispered to himself; and I have but to say so, and these haughty and injurious magistrates will at once cease from insulting and wronging me. But there is that within which tells me that, in submitting to be a prisoner, I shall deliver others from the bondage of Satan. A voice from above is informing me that God has people in the dungeon, and that I may be instrumental to the bringing them into the glorious liberty of His children. Then welcome the prison. I live but to magnify Christ. I forget my earthly citizenship, if so be that sinners may be brought to participate the heavenly. Ah, does not this explain the silence of St. Paul? He cared not for suffering, nay, he courted, he delighted in, suffering, when likely to be instrumental to the turning the wicked from the error of their ways. And he knew that, if he could not make converts in the market-place, he might make them in the dungeon. God showed him a rich harvest of souls from the darkest and least promising field. Therefore did he submit to be cruelly and wrongfully used, when but a word was wanting to secure different treatment, and when, had he not been divinely admonished, it might have been his distinct duty to have uttered that word. And if I admire the

Apostle when, on other and more conspicuous occasions, he stands forward as the champion of truth, undaunted by dangers, undismayed by enemies, because that God had appointed him to the ministering the Gospel to the Gentiles, I know not why I should admire him less, why I should less recognise in him the man consumed with zeal for the glory of Christ, and living for the single end of making known His "unsearchable riches," when I behold him before the rulers at Philippi, a Roman citizen, and yet silently suffering them, in the hope of converting the jailer, to beat him with many stripes, and cast him into prison.

But now, assuming that the Apostle was divinely admonished as to there being work for him to do in that dungeon from which a single word would have saved him, let us examine, more distinctly, the narrative of the jailer's conversion, and see whether it is not made clearer, and more interesting, by the supposition which explains the silence of St. Paul. It is never to be disputed that the grace of God may act suddenly and energetically on the human mind, and make conversion the work of an hour or a moment. And yet it may justly be supposed, that, when conversion is, to all appearance, instantaneously wrought, so that a man passes, in a moment, from neglecting the soul to being all anxiety for its salvation, we see rather the termination of a long series of efforts than the effect of any single operation. Thus, with the jailer at Philippi, it is hardly to be supposed that it was merely at the voice of St. Paul, exhorting him against suicide, that he knew himself to be a sinner in need of a Saviour. For this is, evidently, what he did learn himself to be. The impassioned and terrified question, "What must I do to be saved?" had undoubtedly respect to the salvation of the soul; for, otherwise, it would never have been answered

by a statement of the necessity and efficacy of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

But what made the jailer think about his soul? Not as it would seem the earthquake and its effects; for he thought only of killing himself, when he saw the opened doors; and he would hardly have rushed to suicide because just then made to feel that death would consign him to everlasting misery. The voice of Paul gave his thoughts a different turn, and brought him from meditating the death of the body, to the standing aghast at the death of the soul. And since there was nothing in what the Apostle said to effect this great diversion of thought, though there was to prevent the purpose of suicide, we can only suppose, that, in recognising the voice of St. Paul, the jailer remembered things heard from the Apostle in the sermons which he had been preaching in the streets of Philippi. He must have been aware of the miracle wrought on the "damsel possessed with the spirit of divination," who, for many days, had followed Paul and Silas, crying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, which show unto us the way of salvation." This may have produced in the jailer something of moral uneasiness: he could not quite repress a rising conviction that the Apostle was a messenger from Heaven, and that the possessed damsel, in her frenzy, had uttered nothing but a true description of the office which he bore.

And who shall say whether the patience of the Apostle under wrongs, the meekness with which he submitted to cruel and ignominious treatment, did not do much towards persuading the jailer that the sufferer must have truth on his side? This may have been the Apostle's last sermon, preached through his silence as to his citizen-

ship, that silence procuring him stripes and imprisonment, which were borne with a forgivingness that went straight to the heart of persecutors themselves. And when the jailer was suddenly roused from his sleep, and found that the Apostle, conscious of his innocence, had not availed himself of the opportunity to escape; and heard himself addressed by this Apostle, as if conscious of his purpose, though there were long passages between, which would naturally have prevented his speaking, and, much more, his seeing—the Apostle beseeching him to do himself no harm, and thus eminently requiting evil with good—oh, then the jailer could no longer resist: St. Paul must be a messenger from Heaven; and, if so, what was he who had despised and ill-treated him? I do not know that the earthquake had anything to do with the conversion of the jailer. I do not know that he was even conscious of there having been an earthquake. He started from sleep, and saw the prison doors opened: but he may not have been aware through what supernatural means, attesting that the powers of Heaven were on the side of the Apostle, the bolts and bars had been suddenly loosened. It was the conduct of St. Paul which appears to have finally overcome him—his conduct in remaining in the dungeon, and manifesting good-will towards his enemies.

But this behaviour of the Apostle was only the conclusion of a series of acts of Christian meekness, forbearance, and patience, each of which may be supposed to have done its part in persuading the jailer of the truth of Christianity. And thus you have the conversion of the jailer effected instrumentally through St. Paul's concealing his being a citizen of Rome—that concealment affording opportunity for his so conducting himself under aggravated wrong as to force

upon his enemies the conviction, that he must indeed be charged with a commission from above. Therefore do I regard the Apostle when permitting the magistrates to lay on him many stripes and cast him into prison as I regard him when working a miracle, or ascending Mars' Hill, that he may gain hearing for the Gospel of Redemption. The stripes and the prison were the weapons with which he was to fight: and never did warrior on the field, rich with the emblazonries of chivalry, draw the sword with greater ardency, or in brighter hope, than this Apostle gave his back to the smiters, and his feet to the stocks. He slept not on that eventful night—how could he sleep, when expecting the Lord to come forth in His power, and accomplish the great work of which he had been forewarned? But if he slept not, he prayed—"At midnight Paul and Silas prayed"—and may we not think that the prayers were for the conversion of the jailer? Stripes had been meekly endured, the dungeon had been cheerfully entered, with a view to his conversion; and now prayers were offered up—"O Lord, thine arm is not shortened, that it cannot save: tear asunder the fetters which Satan has bound on this man."

But praises were added to prayers: these holy men knew that nothing could frustrate the purpose of God: they wove an anthem of triumph in thanksgiving for the accomplishment of that for which they still prayed. This was the victory of faith: the praise, superadded to the prayer, proclaimed the fulness of their trust; and then the Almighty arose, and gave them answer in the earthquake. O glorious consummation! It was the hope of this which had all along sustained the Apostle. Ask ye not now why he kept silence. Ask ye not why, when a word would have disarmed persecution, he left the magistrates ignorant of his

citizenship. That silence was kept, in order that the silence of the midnight might be broken by the tumult and the crash of the earthquake, appointed to prevail to the overthrowing a stronghold of sin; and that word was not spoken, in order that, from an agitated and terror-stricken soul, might be wrung a question, itself an evidence and earnest of spiritual deliverance—oh, would that the question could be wrung from every unconverted man in this assembly—"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Now our great object in this discourse has been to lay open to you the expressiveness of the silence maintained by St. Paul in regard of his rights as a citizen of Rome —a silence which, often as the narrative has been read, may perhaps hardly have attracted the attention. And it can scarcely be necessary to observe, that the Apostle's not pleading his privileges must be taken in proof of his thorough devotedness to the service of Christ: he may not have been so admirable when he "fought with beasts at Ephesus" as when "shamefully entreated at Philippi;" for, in the one case, the combat may have been forced on him, and he may have had no option but to fight; whereas we know that, in the other, he had it in his power, by the utterance of a single word, to save himself from the fury of his enemies. But then it ought to be carefully observed, that so soon as the ends proposed by silence had been answered, the Apostle was bold in asserting his privileges. He proclaimed himself a Roman citizen when imprisonment was over, though he kept the fact concealed whilst it would have prevented that imprisonment. This proves that there must have been good reason for the temporary concealment; and that reason we have found in the Apostle's having been forewarned of the great work to be wrought in the dungeon. But now you should

observe that it may be as much our duty in some circumstances to assert rights as in others to surrender them. When it appears that we may advance the cause of Christ by giving up claims, we are but traitors to the Saviour if we press them: but when we shall do no injury to that cause, and, yet more, when we shall possibly further it by putting them forward, we are not only at liberty to plead our citizenship, but are required to do it, if we would be faithful to our Lord. A man may be as humble, as unassuming, as actuated by sound Christian principle, when he goes to law with the offender who has taken away his cloak, as when he suffers him, without resistance, to take his coat also. There is a time to be silent, and there is a time also to speak; a time to submit to wrong, and a time to repel it. St. Paul said nothing at first, because he was anxious to be instrumental in bringing disciples to Christ: he proclaimed his citizenship afterwards, that he might make the magistrates more cautious, for the future, in their dealings with Christians. It sounds like a proud and petulant saying, "Nay, verily, but let them come and fetch us out"—but pride and petulance there could hardly be, where there had been so quiet and patient a submission to insult: Paul had entered the prison in silence, because silence was to be instrumental to the conversion of the jailer and his household: Paul departed from the prison declaring his citizenship, because the declaration was likely to obtain them protection. Oh worthy of all imitation! the Apostle had nothing, and was nothing, which he did not unreservedly consecrate to Christ. His rights as a Roman citizen, rights of which the chief captain said "With a great sum obtained I this freedom," were sunk when they might have sheltered himself; produced when they might be a shield unto others—so that there was but

one motive by which, in all varieties of circumstance, this Apostle was actuated—that Christ might be magnified in him, whether by life or by death.

Oh that we all might endeavour in this great particular to imitate St. Paul! We are not called to the same stern endurances. We may not share in his stupendous achievements. Not for us the scourging, the buffeting, the imprisonment. Not for us the carrying the cross from shore to shore, the waging war, single-handed, with idolatry, the confronting philosophy on Mars' Hill, the facing tyranny at Agrippa's tribunal. But the greater indeed the shame, if, summoned to inconsiderable sacrifices, the surrender of some petty right, the submission to some trivial wrong, in furtherance of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we prefer ourselves to our Master, ashamed perhaps of His cross, and, at least, reluctant to take up that cross, and share it with the Saviour. Henceforwards remember and imitate both the silence and the speech of St. Paul. If silence as to citizenship is likely to bring the jailer to Christ, then welcome bonds, then welcome imprisonment. If the mention of citizenship be likely to gain good for others, though it may do nothing for oneself—and this was the case with the Apostle at Philippi—then, oh for a thousand tongues to give the utterance: he is no real Christian who will not waive a right that Christ may be glorified: he is no real Christian who will not maintain a right that his fellow-Christians may be advantaged.

SERMON XV

BELIEVING A LIE

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie."—2 THESS. ii. 11.

"FOR this cause." These words must be connected with the foregoing verse, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." The want of a "love of the truth" is thus given as a cause, or reason, for that state of delusion which is to issue in final perdition. This being understood, the text presents two remarkable assertions, each demanding the closest attention. The first is the assertion that God Himself may send upon men "strong delusion;" the second is that the effect of this delusion may be to produce actual belief in a lie.

Now you are all aware that God is often represented in Scripture as doing what He only suffers, or permits, to be done—a representation which is sufficiently correct wherever permission is indispensable to the thing being done; wherever, that is, the thing could not be done if permission were withheld. And when you meet with any such expression as that in our text, an expression which apparently ascribes to God more than mere permission, which represents Him as actually causing or occasioning a certain evil result, you are to be careful to interpret it in consistence with well-established principles, to assign it no meaning which you know to be at variance with the

moral character of God. It cannot, for a moment, be supposed that God ever by any direct act fastens a delusion upon men, so that they have no choice but to remain in darkness and error. God "sends a delusion" only in the sense of permitting it, or rather not preventing it. He does not interfere to deceive men, but He may not interfere to keep them from being deceived; and He may be said to "send the delusion" when it could not take possession of the mind, unless He first withdrew certain influences of His Spirit. This is what we understand by the oft-repeated expression that God hardened Pharaoh's heart, when, steeled to prodigy after prodigy, the proud Egyptian refused to let Israel depart. I am sure that God will not harden, in the sense of actually producing the obduracy; for this would make God the author of the fault for which man shall hereafter be condemned. But I am equally sure that it can only be up to a certain point that God will employ means to keep the heart from hardening. A man, compelled to do right, could be in no other position at the tribunal of Heaven than a man who had done only wrong. And, therefore, after there has been a certain amount of resistance to the influences of God's Spirit, a certain degree of displayed determination to prefer falsehood to truth, it is altogether to be expected, and may often be absolutely required, that nothing further should be done for effecting a moral change in the man; that he should be abandoned to his own devices; and this is the being abandoned to final impenitence, to the seared conscience and the impenetrable heart.

Here then comes "the sending strong delusion." It is "sent," inasmuch as when a man has shown himself bent on the hating and casting out truth, God may determine on the finally withdrawing from him all the

aids of His Spirit, and then the case is virtually the same as though the dam were removed which had partially restrained some vast inundation—the desolating torrent is "sent," because that which kept it back has been taken away. You have here the only account which can justly be given of the commission of "unpardonable sin"—no sin being unpardonable under the Christian dispensation because of its special enormity; but only because it consists in "quenching" the Spirit of God, in driving away that celestial agent without whose assistance there cannot be repentance—repentance without which there cannot be forgiveness. And though there may not be one of you—as we heartily trust there is not—who has yet brought himself into this desperate condition, yet we affectionately entreat you all to remember that by every resistance to whispered admonitions, by every thwarting of conscience, by every decision for what is known to be wrong in preference to what is felt to be right, you take an onward step in a path which leads straight to that fearful point where God's Spirit must forsake you, or where, in other words, you will be left to your own guidance, and therefore sealed for destruction. Take ye good heed—the young amongst you more especially—how, by loving darkness rather than light, blinding yourselves to truths which, as you are secretly conscious, cannot be acknowledged without a pledge to an altered course of life, ye gradually, though almost imperceptibly, advance towards a position which may undoubtedly be reached, though even when reached there may be nothing external to distinguish and mark it—the position at which all moral sensitiveness is finally destroyed; at which a man may cease to feel, not because disease has terminated, but because mortification has begun; at which

a man may cease to doubt, not, however, because his faith is firmly settled in fundamental truths, but because, having obstinately disliked and opposed the truth, he has provoked God to visit him with judicial blindness, to "send" him, in the expressive language of the text, "strong delusion," the energy of error, that he should believe even a lie.

But we may now assume that you will refer to the right party the authorship of the delusion, that you will dismiss all suspicion as to the thorough justice of the share which God Himself may take in producing the state in which even "a lie" shall be believed. We will now confine ourselves to the considering this state; for the description is very remarkable, and will furnish considerations and inferences of no common importance. The belief of a lie—this is the threatened visitation—the state not being that in which a man has absolutely no creed whatsoever, or in which he hangs in doubt as to what creed to adopt, but a state of belief, of fixed and abiding persuasion, though, all the while, that which he believes is a lie; that of whose truth he is persuaded is absolute falsehood. Men may have formed wrong theories in religion; and because those theories may square better with their prejudices and inclinations, they may have withstood all possible demonstrations of their falseness, thus displaying an inveterate dislike for the truth, and as inveterate an affection for error. And God may, in just judgment, resolve that nothing more shall be done towards convincing them of the falseness of their theory; that they shall be left to believe as truth what they have so obstinately refused to abandon as error. This would appear to be precisely the instance marked out by our text. A man has no love for the truth, and therefore is constantly endeavouring to settle himself in falsehood;

and God at last punishes this man—punishes him, after a series of unsuccessful attempts to bring him to the putting away error, by leaving him to believe what he has been wishing to believe though all the while it be a lie—a lie which he has had full means of detecting and disowning.

And here we have the explanation of a fact which often perplexes the Christian—the fact that, after much apparent searching for truth, men will often settle down into infidels and heretics, and will remain as thoroughly persuaded of being in the right as is the meek Christian who commits himself unreservedly to Christ. When Solomon delivered the very memorable words, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," he clearly intimated that there might be a thorough persuasion of having found the truth, along with an actual adherence to falsehood. But the startling thing is, that the way should "seem right unto a man," as though sufficient were not done for his guidance, and he might be hastening to ruin with the full conviction of advancing to safety. Such a man must evidently be one who has considered his way, sat in judgment, as it were, upon different paths, and decided for one in preference to the rest. And the moral wonder is, that consideration should ever land a man in error; that where there has been actually a searching after truth there should be conviction of having found it, though it be virtually falsehood which is embraced. Yes, it is a moral wonder, but a wonder of which our text gives adequate explanation. It is not that God has suffered error to bear so close resemblance to truth that, even where the examination has been careful, the one may easily be mistaken for the other. It is not that the line of separation between the two is so narrow and ill-defined that he, who honestly wishes to be

right, may nevertheless be unavoidably wrong. But if there may be such "strong delusion" that even "a lie" is believed, we learn, from our text, that it comes not till men have proved themselves void of all love for the truth. And, if void of all love for the truth, we may be sure that, though they have searched, they have not searched with the honest desire of discovering the right, but rather with a secret wish of being confirmed in the wrong. If a man desire to prove the Bible a forgery, he may become fully persuaded that the Bible is a forgery: examining the evidences with a hatred of the truth, he is landed in a delusion which makes falsehood appear fact. If a man wish to rid his creed of the divinity of Christ, and of a propitiation for sin, he may become thoroughly convinced that Christ was a mere man, and that no proper atonement was made on the cross; he reads the Scriptures, but he reads them with the desire of not finding in them the orthodox doctrines, and therefore is he not permitted to find them. The Bible may be believed false; Christ may be believed a man; sin may be believed venial; our own works may be believed sufficient to effect our justification. Yes, these tenets may be actually believed; we do not charge those who hold them with hypocrisy, or insincerity, or dishonesty. It were better perhaps if we could: the mind, not convinced of the truth of what it holds, may yet be accessible to a proof of its falsehood. But the lie may be believed; the lie may assume all the province and prerogative of truth; and then, alas! there is hardly a hope of mastering and eradicating the error; the assurance of unbelief, like the assurance of faith—the one wrought by the departure, and the other by the indwelling, of the Holy Ghost—will be almost proof against assault.

And we cannot but gather, from this alleged possibility of the actual belief of a lie, the explanation of that calmness and composure with which death is often met, even by those who have no theology at all, or only one which they have invented for themselves. It is distrust which makes a deathbed uneasy: let there be thorough belief, and there may be quietness notwithstanding there is falsehood. If there be actual belief that the soul perishes with the body, what is to prevent the disciple of materialism from expiring without betraying any emotion? A lingering suspicion of the soul's immortality might cause him to be disturbed and distracted; but an assured persuasion that the soul is not immortal, might enable him to meet death with utter indifference. If there be actual belief that God is too merciful to punish, there is no reason why the sinner may not rush into the Divine presence undismayed by the thought of having to give account of things done in the body: if indeed he do not literally believe, but only desire to believe, the lie, he may be harassed by forebodings and fears; but suppose the lie believed—and we have the express warrant of God's word that the lie may be believed—and I know not why the man, convinced that he shall not be punished for sin, may not die as composedly as another convinced that his sins are forgiven through Christ.

Therefore I do not necessarily gather anything from deathbeds, from the placidness and tranquillity with which perhaps, in nine cases out of ten, men seem to meet their end. I cannot tell what persuasion may have gotten hold of the mind; but I know that there are a hundred delusions which would give the mind peace, provided only they could be passed off as truths; and I learn, from our text, that the actual belief of

a lie is no imaginary case, but one of very possible, and it may be not unfrequent occurrence. With many there would seem to be an opinion that there is a sort of power in death of exposing deceits, so that, if it be a cheat which they are putting on themselves, they shall find it out when they come to die, and probably in time to correct their mistake. They attribute to death what death does not necessarily possess. They forget, or they are ignorant, that belief, actual belief, is not confined to truths, but may be extended to falsehoods. And what a man believes whilst living, he may believe when dying. The hour of death is not the day of judgment, however in those dread and inscrutable moments, when the cords are being loosened which tie together soul and body, there may be glimpses of another world, which detect the hollowness and falsehood of much which has been admired in this. And it is the light from "the great white throne," by which alone shall all falsehood be convincingly exposed. Delusion may live through death, though it cannot live after death. Once more, therefore, let us warn you all against cherishing any such prejudices against truth as may provoke God's Spirit to leave you to yourselves. You are on the high road towards believing a lie when you secretly wish to believe it. There is no saying where you will stop, if you indulge an inclination for falsehood, and this is the same thing as indulging a hatred of truth. You may not stop short of actual belief, belief in the lie; you may become the atheist, thoroughly convinced that no great first cause gave being to the universe; the deist, without a lingering doubt that God hath never revealed Himself to man, except on the broad tablet of creation; the Socinian, unhesitatingly persuaded that no Divine person ever took on him our nature; or the Pha-

risee, freed from the least suspicion that a human righteousness may be insufficient to justify. And, having reached actual belief, you may live easy, you may die easy; but, alas, alas! you must be miserable through eternity—that you literally believed will be no excuse whatsoever, if it be a lie which has been believed; for it is only to such as have "received not the love of the truth that they might be saved," that God "sends strong delusion, that they should believe even a lie."

"Believe a lie"—so, then, there may be faith in falsehood, as well as faith in truth; and believers in revelation, in the glorious Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, are not necessarily, as they are often represented, the most credulous of mortals. It ought to be, and I think it must be, a stronger faith, if we may use the words without being misunderstood, which embraces a lie, than is that which embraces a truth. This is a point which should be often insisted on by ministers of the Gospel. We are quite persuaded that too much is ordinarily conceded to infidels; that they who believe in the Bible are too apt to confine themselves altogether to the defensive, as though it were never their part to attempt the offensive. We suffer the unbeliever to bring his objections against Christianity, to find out difficulties and apparent inconsistencies in the scheme of the Gospel; and we content ourselves with removing his objections, with solving the alleged difficulties, and reconciling the seeming contradictions. We seldom think of carrying the war, as it were, into the territory of the enemy, plying infidelity with objections, and urging arguments against the systems with which philosophizing men would endeavour to supersede the religion of Christ. Whereas we may, without hesitation, assert, that, if there be difficulties in Christianity, there

are immeasurably greater in infidelity. We do not deny that there are difficulties, "things hard to be understood," and some perhaps which, in our present condition, it is impossible to explain. And, therefore, we admit that there is great room, and great demand, for the exercise of faith: he who receives the Bible as God's word, and submits himself to Christ as his Lord, is undoubtedly required to believe much, on the mere force of testimony, which is perplexing to reason and which he might be disposed to reject, were it not ascertained to him by overwhelming witness.

But is there nothing to be said on the other side?

If it be hard to receive, is it easy to reject revelation? Is all the difficulty with the truth? is there no difficulty with the lie? Nay, they may talk to us of the credulity of the believer in revelation—it is absolutely nothing when compared with the credulity of the unbeliever. You know what we mean by credulity—the credulous man is one who will receive improbable, and almost incredible, things; who is so easy of belief that you may persuade him to admit fables as readily as facts. Now who displays the greater credulity? or, if you like the word better, who exhibits the stronger faith?—the man who rejects Christianity, or the man who receives it? What must I believe, in order to disbelieve the Gospel? I must believe, that in an age of the world when philosophy was achieving some of its proudest triumphs there arose a few ignorant and illiterate men, who banded together to impose on the nations a new system of religion. I must believe that this system, which paid no homage whatsoever to reason, but rather required it to submit itself in silence, displaced every other which the sages of antiquity had excogitated and polished; that a

religion which, in place of giving indulgence to human passions, demanded a morality never before imagined, cast out superstitions which commended themselves to men by encouraging them in sensuality; and, nevertheless, that a creed thus successful where there was everything to oppose, thus powerful in weakness, thus irresistible where it had passions, prejudices, interests, to contend with, was but a fable which a few fishermen had devised, a cheat too preposterous for the wise to notice, too monstrous for any but the irrational to adopt. This is what I must believe, if I take part with the infidel. And let the infidel reason how he will, there is no miracle recorded in Scripture which is half as hard of belief as is the spread of Christianity on the supposition of its falsehood.

I care not, for the moment, on which side lies truth. I am merely on the question of which requires the greater credulity. And we say, that set side by side what has to be believed by the Christian, and what by the infidel; and a much stronger faith is required from the infidel than is demanded from the Christian. In the creed of the infidel there are things far more unlikely, far harder to account for, than in the creed of the Christian. And yet the infidel is the rational man, the man of a philosophical and independent mind, whilst the Christian is the poor credulous being, for whom nothing is too monstrous or absurd. Nay, let us throw back the charge of credulity. I really have not faith enough to be an infidel. I cannot get down the difficulties of infidelity. With all its marvellousness, I can bring myself to believe that Christ rose from the dead; but there is a further point in marvellousness to which I really cannot go: I cannot bring myself to believe that Christ did not rise

from the dead. I call this unspeakably the more marvellous thing of the two. For there is no debate whatsoever, that Apostles preached the resurrection of Christ. This is matter of history, and not at all of argument. If Christ had not risen, they must have known it; they must themselves have been privy to the stealing and secreting His body. And, knowing it to be false, how came they to publish it as true? publish it in the certainty of persecution, when nothing could be gained but bitterness in this life and torment in the next; when they exposed themselves to every indignity and suffering from which nature recoils, and could look for no recompense from God, except that fearful retribution which is in store for "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie?" I do not find half as much marvellousness in the alleged fact that Christ rose from the dead, as there would be in the fact, that the Apostles preached that He had risen when they knew that He had not. I have credulity enough for the one; but I must leave it to the sceptic to be credulous enough for the other.

And the same might be said of other leading facts in the Christian religion which the believer confesses and the infidel disdains. They present greater difficulties when rejected than they do when received. And this is comparatively overlooked. All the show of reason is supposed to be with scepticism, the stretch and strain of faith are presumed to be wholly with the Christian. Thus, as we have already said, with the early spread of Christianity. The infidel, as well as the believer, is bound to account for such a fact. The believer has no difficulty whatsoever. He admits that stupendous miracles were wrought by the first preachers of Christianity; and a few illiterate men, armed with such credentials from

God, might well pass as conquerors over the face of the habitable globe. But the infidel can give no explanation at all commensurate with the thing to be explained. He may talk with Gibbon of the intolerant and inflexible zeal of the early Christians; but the tenacity with which error is held by a few poorly accounts for its rapid spread amongst the many. He may speak of the influence of the doctrine of a future state, never fully published till Christians arose; but this begs the question: men would not receive the doctrine, except on adequate proof: if they were ready to endure present tribulation in hopes of happiness hereafter, at all events there must have been evidence given that what was promised was likely to be performed. And yet the Christian alone has to admit mysteries, things obscure and insufficiently explained, which the understanding repudiates, or by which it finds itself baffled! Oh, it is high time that infidelity were more subjected to offensive attack, that Christians boldly taunted it with its difficulties, in place of merely confessing and elucidating their own. And I do protest, that when I consider what the creed of a sceptic is, what miracles he must acknowledge in denying the miracles alleged in the Gospel, what hard things he must maintain in rejecting the simplest truths of Christianity, what a labyrinth he is involved in by the mere putting away of revelation, I am filled with amazement that any can be found credulous enough, not only to admit such propositions, but to consider the admission a proof of independence of mind. Ah, it does not become us to sit in judgment on our fellow-men, to pass upon them any harsh verdict: but certainly such cases might seem to fall under the statement of our text, that, through dislike of the truth, men may bring themselves into such

a position that God sends upon them "strong delusion, so that they believe even a lie."

Let this be remembered and pondered. There may be greater credulity in unbelief than in belief. If any of you should be taunted by the sceptic with believing incredible things, let him not fear to throw back the taunt, to affirm that what the sceptic believes is immeasurably less credible than what himself holds. Examine, and you will find this the case. God has made the falsehood more improbable than the truth; and reason, if she has but fair play, has less difficulty in admitting the truth than the lie. There is no cause why the believer should concede to the unbeliever that his system is the simpler of the two and lays a less task on the human understanding. A world without a revelation is an incalculably obscurer thing than revelation itself: a diffused Christianity is not the thousandth part as easily to be explained on the supposition of its falsehood, as on the supposition of its truth. Then we take high ground. The champion of revelation is the champion of reason; and he who is too wise for "the wisdom that is from above," is virtually a man, who, because he has found a river in his way, plunges into the ocean; or who, in order to extricate himself from the darkness of the night, throws himself into a cavern which no sunbeam ever enters. Be ye therefore heedful—the young amongst you more especially—that ye be not ashamed of piety as though it argued a feeble capacity. Rather be assured—forasmuch as revelation is the great strengthener of reason—that the march of mind, which leaves the Bible in the rear, is an advance, like that of our first parents in Paradise, towards knowledge, but at the same time towards death.

SERMON XVI

THE PRODIGAL SON

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."—LUKE xv. 31, 32.

THE Parable of the Prodigal Son must be familiar to you all: you are all moreover, it may be, accustomed to consider it as easily to be interpreted, the meaning being as obvious as the narrative is beautiful. We doubt, however, whether you are right in this. Nothing indeed can be easier than the fastening on the character of the younger son as representing to us that of the sinner, who has left his Father's house, and wandered far away from God and from happiness. And very touching is the accommodation, even if it be nothing more, of the parable to the dealings of our Maker with returning transgressors, when the father is represented as running to meet the prodigal, whilst yet a great way off, falling on his neck, and receiving him at once to his home and his heart. But you must remember that there are two sons; and it has always seemed to us that no application of the family sketch could be just which did not hold good of the elder brother as well as of the younger. We can have no right to say that this or that person can be intended by the younger son, unless he not only have a father with all the tenderness, but also an elder brother with all the churl-

ishness, of the characters which are introduced into the parable; and unless what the parable ascribes to these latter be as applicable in every point as what it ascribes to himself. Before, however, we proceed to examine what interpretation will meet all the points in the parable, let us briefly consider the several circumstances of the story; for we have no right to suppose any of them so trivial that they may safely be overlooked.

The allegory then—for such we seem bound to consider it—is just what follows: A father is represented as having two sons; and the history opens abruptly: the sons are grown to manhood; but we are told of nothing which had previously occurred in the household. There is no mention of a mother—though we might have expected, in so touching a picture of domestic occurrences, some reference to her who is commonly most prominent in the family group. Whether she were living, or had gone to the grave before the prodigal wandered, there would have been a naturalness in an allusion to the mother, which gives reason for supposing that the silence was designed. Probably the mention of none but the father was intended to tell us, that the sons represented in some way the human race, standing in the relation of children to God their Creator. A family with only a father at its head is an apt figure of humankind, or indeed of all orders of created being, deriving their origin exclusively from Deity. Up to the time at which the parable opens, there had been no interruption, we may believe, of the domestic happiness: both the sons had remained with the father, and both, it may be, been dutiful and affectionate. But now the family is suddenly broken up. The younger son, impatient, probably, of the restraints of his father's well-ordered house, determines to quit his home, and

settle where he might gratify his passions without observation or control. But it is necessary that he carry with him the means of subsistence, and therefore he applies to his father, and solicits him to assign him his share of the common patrimony. The request was unusual; for the death of parents must commonly precede the division of their property. Unusual, however, and unreasonable as the request was, it was immediately granted, as though to mark to us the singular kindness and benevolence of the father. Having thus obtained the means of subsistence, the younger son quickly departed, with no intention, as it would seem, of ever returning: for nothing but the urgency of his wants moved him at last to retrace his steps.

And now the history confines itself to the fortunes of the prodigal, saying nothing of the elder brother, of whom we are to suppose that he remained with his father, increasing by his industry that portion of the patrimony which the division had assigned him. The younger brother is now represented as giving the rein to every species of lawless indulgence, and rapidly diminishing by debauchery the resources he had carried with him from home. But the eye of God was upon him; and Providence was preparing for both his punishment and reformation. There arose a mighty famine in the land: he began to be in want: he had to submit to the lowest degradation, hiring himself to a citizen who sent him into the fields to feed swine. In this extreme of wretchedness he remembered the house of his father, and the abundance enjoyed by even the menials of the establishment. And then he suddenly resolved, as though possessed of a new and better mind, to return to the abandoned home—he knew, indeed, that he had forfeited all claim to the rank

and privileges of a son; but might he not yet be admitted on the footing of a servant? There was bread enough and to spare, and he was perishing with hunger—surely then, whatever his faults, that would not be denied him which was plentifully bestowed on the meanest in the household. It augured well for the depth and sincerity of his repentance, that no sooner had the prodigal formed than he acted on the resolution. He did not resist, but yielded to, the admonitions of the Spirit, which was now working through the awakened consience, and he arose at once and bent his steps towards his home.

The narrative here becomes eminently beautiful. We have reason to think that the father had professedly given up all hope of seeing his son; for the language, which he afterwards uses, is scarcely to be explained on any other supposition. When the son had been restored to him, he speaks of him as of one who had been dead and was alive again, who had been lost and was found—expressions which certainly denote that the prodigal was considered as finally separated from the family, and that no expectations of his return were cherished, or, at all events, avowed. Yet the father discovers him, whilst yet a great way off, as though he had never ceased to watch for him, and to look intently along the road by which he had departed. Years must have greatly changed him: sorrow and suffering must have worn him down: yet no sooner is his figure seen dimly on the horizon, than it is recognised by the anxious parent, who rushes forward to welcome home the wanderer. The father had embraced the child, and thus testified his readiness to forgive, before the child could utter his meditated confession. The kind reception, however, though it must have greatly assured the prodigal, did not make him forget the acknowledgment of his fault. The medi-

tated words broke from his lips, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He had intended to go further, to ask that he might be received as a servant: but the father interrupted him, directing that a ring and the best apparel should be brought, and the fatted calf killed, that there might be general rejoicing.

So far all went well, but the harmony was soon disturbed. We now hear again of the elder brother, on whom the narrative had long been silent. He was engaged in his pastoral occupations when his brother returned, so that he had heard nothing of the unlooked-for event. When the day's work was done, he drew near, as usual, to the house, but was surprised to hear the unwonted sounds of music and dancing. He calls one of the servants, and is indignant at finding that one so profligate and unworthy had met such a welcome. The father, informed of his conduct, comes forth, and condescends to expostulate with him. He states, mildly yet firmly, the grounds there were for rejoicing; but is only answered by complaints of the inequality of his dealings, killing the fatted calf for the prodigal, but never having given even a kid to the son who had been always obedient. The parable then terminates abruptly. The father is left reasoning with his son, and endeavouring to overcome his unwillingness to welcome his brother. We are not told the result of the expostulation: but the silence implies want of success; for we can hardly think that, had the elder brother been prevailed on to associate with the younger, the narrative would have failed to communicate a circumstance which would have added greatly to its beauty, and been most gratifying to the feelings of every reader—for which of you does not experience something

of regret and dissatisfaction at the way in which the parable ends? Who does not wonder at the churlishness of the elder brother, and marvel how he could have resisted, as he seems sullenly and obstinately to have done, the pathetic remonstrance of the father, "It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found?"

Now upon one point there can hardly be dispute—that by the father in this parable God Himself is represented. If you attach any moral whatsoever to the parable, you must necessarily regard the Creator as the Head of the supposed family; and in determining that God is the Father, you determine also that the human race, or certain portions of that race, must be understood by the two sons. But now who are these sons? Some think that the Pharisees are represented by the elder son, and the Publicans, with other of the more profligate Jews, by the younger. And we readily admit that no representation of a profligate, and then penitent, sinner could be more beautifully accurate than that furnished by the description of the prodigal son. We are sure that there is nowhere to be found a finer piece of moral painting, nor one which is truer to the facts of the case, than that exhibited in the history of the younger brother, when this brother is considered as the transgressor who has gone great lengths from God, and then thrown himself, in true contrition of heart, on the compassion of his heavenly parent. Nor, indeed, could we ever believe that any application of the parable was fair and legitimate, which did not identify in some way the younger son with the profligate and wretched, and make the whole story of his departure, and return, and reception, figurative of man's alienation from

God, and of God's willingness to forgive the contrite and repentant. But whilst the Publicans might most justly be represented by the younger son, could the Pharisees be by the elder? Certainly, the Pharisees murmured because Christ ate with Publicans, just as the elder brother, because the father made a feast on the return of the younger. But the Pharisees could not, with any truth, be said to have remained in the home of their Father, whilst the Publicans went into a strange land; for, beyond question, they were at least as far gone from righteousness, as depraved if not as outwardly profligate. Nor had the Pharisees any advantage over the Publicans if both should repent: there must, then, be strange wresting of language, ere we can find a sense in which God could say to the Pharisees as a body, the Pharisees who were to be destroyed and cast out for their wickedness, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." And the same difficulty, as we have before said, attaches to the supposition that the parable delineates God's dealings generally with penitent sinners. But if the prodigal son denote every contrite transgressor of any age and any country, then there is no imaginable person whom the elder brother can be supposed to represent; and the parable is expounded only by keeping one half out of sight. And thus you see we are still without an adequate interpretation of the parable, an interpretation which shall hold good of every part; but such an interpretation we now think to lay before you, considering the Jew as the elder brother, and the Gentile as the younger; an interpretation which will leave in all its beauty that accommodation of the allegory which finds in the prodigal the picture of the penitent sinner, but which, at the same time, will explain what is related of the elder brother, and

give meaning to the otherwise obscure words of our text, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all which I have is thine."

Now you are all aware that, at the time when the parable was delivered, God was about to make a great change in His dealings with mankind, withdrawing peculiar privileges from the Jew, and granting to the whole Gentile world the opportunities of repentance and access to Himself. You are further aware that all the prejudices of the Jews were set against this change; so that the throwing down the barriers which marked them off from the rest of mankind was never regarded by them as a possibility, and could not be predicted without exciting the most violent antipathy. Indeed, the Jew finally refused to receive a Gospel which placed the Gentile on the same footing with himself, and therefore was he, though the natural branch, broken off from the olive-tree, and branches wild by nature were grafted in his stead. And it might well be expected that a change such as this would occupy a large place in the discourses of Christ, and that the Redeemer would strive to prepare His countrymen for the coming extension of God's favour to all men. Accordingly, it is admitted on all hands that the design of sundry of the parables was to indicate the calling of the Gentile and the rejection of the Jew; and we are now to see whether a similar design may not be traced in the parable of the prodigal son. We know that the distinction between Jew and Gentile was not established from the first; but that, when once it had been drawn, it became the only distinction which the Scriptures recognise amongst men. Until the call of Abraham, and the separation of one family as the depository of God's promises, there had been no difference, as it would seem, in the moral condition, or religious circumstances, of the several parts of the human

race. All were on the same footing, having the same means of gaining a knowledge of God, and the same encouragement to look for pardon through a Mediator. And this is aptly represented by the parable before us, inasmuch as the two sons have equally spent the opening years of life in the house of their father, and a considerable period elapses ere any separation takes place.

But no sooner is a separation effected, than the history of one brother becomes quite distinct from that of the other; just as the Jew and the Gentile, when once the distinction was made, became widely detached, having never, even yet, been brought back into unison. The parable, however, though it may thus be carried to yet earlier days, does not open until the division of the father's property: in process of time the great body of men, losing and corrupting traditional religion, and desiring nothing but the free indulgence of their passions, may be said to have departed from their Father's house, just as did the prodigal, when wishing to emancipate himself from parental control. But God was not willing that all knowledge of Himself and of His will should perish from the earth, that there should be no witness for truth throughout that long night of idolatry which would precede the appearing of Christ. He therefore resolved to set apart, as it were, one family for Himself; to keep, if we may thus express it, Abraham and his posterity in His own house, whilst the rest of human kind wandered far away. But even when doing this, He may justly be said to have divided His substance between His sons; for when Abraham was called, and thus a distinction established between the elder son and the younger, there was no difference in the degrees of light vouchsafed to different men; all had the same conscience and the same amount of revelation; so that the

Gentile, in his departure, carried with him the same portion of the moral patrimony as fell to the Jew who remained with the father. The Jew, indeed, by continuing at home, and serving his Divine parent, increased his share of the patrimony; just as the elder brother, by working in the fields and applying his industry to his part of the inheritance, must have added to the goods which became his at the division. But at the moment of separation the Jew and the Gentile were on an equality; and the Gentile, like the younger son, carried with him, in his departure from the immediate family of Heaven, enough for his maintenance had it been carefully husbanded.

But, when left to themselves, men either lost, or rendered useless the greatest part of the knowledge originally communicated, just as it happened to the prodigal, and through the very same causes: in the one case the means of natural subsistence failed, in the other of spiritual; not because too scanty at first, but simply because they had been wasted through riotous living. As the time fixed for the Redeemer's advent approached, a corruption of religion, and a depravity of life, had overspread the globe, such as too plainly proved that, unless God interposed, no remedy could be applied to the immense disorganization. There was verily, and in the highest degree, that worst famine which can come upon a people, "not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord." As this famine pressed on the Gentiles, they seemed but to grow in the resolve of remaining far off from God. Just as the prodigal is represented as joining himself to a citizen of the country, though to be occupied in the most degrading employment, and receive only husks as his food, thus the Gentile world sold itself finally, and without any power of redemption, to Satan, though the

work to be done was the foul work of sin, and the wages to be received were uneasiness here and eternal death hereafter. But now God was about to interpose. The prodigal is represented as "coming to himself," sorrow and privation having been apparently instrumental to the convincing him of his madness, and calling up the memory of the home he had left. This exhibits to us the Gentile world as not yet made acquainted with God's purpose of mercy, but as brought to contrition for its faults, and to a determination to repent and forsake sin. And then its thoughts turn naturally to the plenty and happiness enjoyed in the household of its Father, and of which not only the elder brother, but even many servants partook.

In every age, many who were not Jews by birth had been admitted into the family of God—proselytes, who, if not placed exactly in the position of sons, were yet as "hired servants," who shared abundantly in the blessings provided by the Father. And God might have received the Gentile world as a proselyte, and have punished, whilst pardoning, by not granting it the full advantages of a son. But this would not have accorded with His unmeasured loving-kindness; this would not have satisfied the yearnings of a heart which had never ceased to feel tenderly towards the suffering and the exiled. And therefore when the Gentiles, moved by the strivings of His Spirit, showed a readiness to return to Him, he embraced them at once with all the ardour of an unbounded affection; and when they would have declared their unworthiness to enter His family, unless it were as servants, He prevented the confession, and showed that He had in store for them the very highest of privileges, for He commanded that "the best robe" be brought forth, even the

perfect righteousness of a Mediator, in which they might be arrayed; and a ring to be put on the hand, in token that He would make with them an everlasting covenant; and shoes upon the feet, that they might be equipped for the race set before them; and that the fatted calf should be killed, or the blessings, long promised and long in preparation, be at last bestowed upon the world.

And the Gentiles do not answer more nicely to the younger son than the Jews to the elder. Whilst the prodigal had been wasting his substance by riotous living, his brother had remained in the house of the father; as the Jews continued in outward communion with God, whilst the Gentiles were given up to idolatry and profligacy. But, proud and jealous of their peculiar privileges, they could not tolerate the Christian scheme, when it went to establish equality between Jew and Gentile. It might be said of them that, as they returned in the evening from their usual occupations in the fields, from performing the ordinances of the Levitical code, they heard music and dancing, the tokens of rejoicing at the bringing nigh of those who were some time afar off. And then, in place of entering in at once, and taking part in the gladness, they called one of the servants of the family, addressed themselves to the preachers of Christianity, and inquired the cause of these unwonted demonstrations of joy. Then were they angry; they refused to join in welcoming the wanderer; they rejected the invitation to combine with other nations, and form together the Church of the long-expected Christ. God reasoned with them, expostulated with them, just as the father with the elder son, showing them how it consisted with the graciousness of His nature that He should extend mercy to the stranger. But the Jew only answered, contemptuously and sullenly, "Lo,

these many years do I serve thee; neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." Undoubtedly he greatly exaggerated both his obedience and the strictness of the discipline under which he had been held. Yet it was, to a certain extent, true that the Jews had been tenacious of the ceremonial law, and that the dispensation, beneath which they lived, had been comparatively stern and severe. St. Peter styles the law "a yoke which neither they nor their fathers had been able to bear." And the father does not deny what the elder son advanced; but he declares that the restoration of the prodigal was not to interfere with the rights of the firstborn. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all which I have is thine." In vain, however, were the Jews treated with the greatest consideration. The parable leaves the parent still remonstrating with his elder son, and thus implies that the remonstrance had not yet prevailed. And the remonstrance may be said to be still going on—the Jew being still invited, and still refusing, to combine into one Church with the Gentile.

But we are assured, on the witness of many prophecies, that there shall come a time when the pride and infidelity of the Jews shall be conquered, when the elder son will thankfully join himself in brotherhood with the younger. The Jew has yet to be restored to the dignities of the firstborn, and occupy the chief place amongst the tribes of a regenerated earth. The promises will yet be fulfilled which declare that the first dominion shall come to the daughter of Zion, and the Kingdom to the daughter of Jerusalem. Yet, oh yet, shall the Jews look on Him whom they pierced; and they shall flow in from every quarter to the land of their

fathers; and whereas their country hath been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through it, God will make it "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." "Thou art ever with me, and all which I have is thine."—In receiving home and welcoming, and rejoicing over my prodigal child, I do no wrong to my elder son: I forget not my covenant with him; and I detract nothing whatsoever from his birthright. "Thou art ever with me"—I may punish thy perverseness by a temporary banishment; but "I know the thoughts which I think towards thee, thoughts of good and not of evil, to give thee an expected end." "And all which I have is thine"—I may allow, for an inconsiderable moment, and in recompense of pride and misdoing, trouble and want to be thy portion; but my purpose in reference to Israel is, that "they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat and for wine and for oil, and for the young of the flock and of the herd; and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all."

And thus we may venture to affirm that if the parable under review be considered as an allegorical history of the Jewish and Gentile Churches, the part which has reference to the elder son is as satisfactorily interpreted as that which concerns the younger. A consistent explanation is furnished of the whole narrative; even the abruptness of the termination is proved full of meaning. In the incompleteness of the parable we have the history of the Jew from the days of Christ downward to our own; whilst the declarations of the father lead us on to yet future times, and associate themselves with prophecies which sketch the final majesty and happiness of the children of Abraham. So that, by a singularly appropriate allegory,

which appears the more admirable the more it is examined, Christ delineated a great change about to be made in God's dealings with men, the results of that change extending themselves to the very limits of time. He predicted, and that too in a manner the best adapted to the peculiar truths which He desired to convey, the calling of the Gentiles, with the opposite and consequent rejection of the Jews. But He went beyond this: He glanced at yet distant and glorious times—oh! when the Jew is brought, as brought he shall be, to own that it was indeed meet to make merry and be glad, when the lost brother was found, the dead brought to life; then in the majesty which shall throng his own restoration to his Father's land, in the dignity and dominion with which his nation shall be crowned, as Jerusalem rises from the dust, and puts on glorious apparel, "her walls salvation, and her gates praise," shall be the full accomplishment of the emphatic words, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all which I have is thine."

And let it not be thought, that in taking the younger son as a picture of the Gentile world, we lose any of those exquisite touches on which the mind loves to linger, when the history is applied to individual sinners. If, indeed, the prodigal be that great body of men who were by nature "strangers from the covenants of promise," do not we ourselves belong to this body? And is not each amongst us, therefore, described as a wanderer from his Father's house? Is not each encouraged to return by the promise of a full forgiveness and rich welcome? Yes, we address ourselves unhesitatingly to every one in this assembly as born in the condition of the prodigal son. He has gone away from a home in which plenty reigns and peace ever dwells, and sold himself to a taskmaster

who employs him on what is vile, and repays him with what is wretched. But the door of the forsaken house is not closed: it stands ever open: and there needs nothing but that, moved by a feeling of destitution, he take with him words, and confess his sin to the Lord; and oh, whilst he is still "a great way off," his Creator will see him, and come forth to meet him, and embrace him, and forgive him. We can beseech every transgressor, by the glowing tenderness, by that deep appeal to all the best sensibilities of our nature, which pervades the parable now examined, to make trial of God's readiness to pardon. Will any act as though the prodigal had been repulsed, received with a frown, or driven back in anger? Oh that none of you may be deaf to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely! Oh that none may spend money for that which is not bread, now that the fatted calf has been killed: none persist in wearing their soiled and torn garments, when they may be clothed in perfect righteousness: none obstinately wed themselves to shame and death, when they may put on the ring of fellowship with the ever-living God. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Come these words from the heart of any one of you? Blessed be God for the utterance: faith in Christ will soon follow contrition for sin: there is a noble chaunt from heavenly places, "This our brother was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

SERMON XVII

THE FOOLISHNESS OF PREACHING

"For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe."—1 Cor. i. 21.

YOU remember the assertion of St. James, "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world." In conformity with this assertion, if we ever meet with a Scriptural statement which represents God as making an experiment, we may be sure that the object of the experiment is not that of satisfying Himself on some doubtful or undetermined point—for this would be inconsistent with His alleged foreknowledge—the experiment must rather be made for the sake of the creatures who stand round as spectators. In our text, for example, there is mention of a great experiment made by the Almighty, before the great plan of redemption was developed and wrought out. God knew well enough that, so long as the world was left to itself, its unassisted efforts would never bring it into acquaintance with its Creator. He required a practical demonstration of this fact. He knew it as well before any trial was made, as after the melancholy experiment had been going on for centuries. Yet St. Paul, you observe, represents the proved incapacity of the world as a result of the wisdom of the Almighty. "After that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God." We can only understand the expression as denoting

that God, in the exercise of His infinite and unerring wisdom, left the world, for a while comparatively to itself, in order that the necessity of a Divine interposition might be shown by the futility of human searchings after knowledge. It was the wisdom of God not to reveal Himself till thorough practical witness had been afforded that He could never be discovered, except through revelation. Here, indeed, God is represented as making an experiment. But evidently the experiment was not needed to prove anything to God: He knew well enough, that, left to ourselves, we should never find Him out; but the experiment was required to prove something to ourselves; to shut us up to a consciousness of our own inability. And we wish to show you that it was a course, such as might have been expected from the wisdom of the Almighty, this leaving the world to try and obtain for itself the knowledge of God. Though there are also other points suggested by the text. Besides the experiment made upon mankind, St. Paul sets before us the process adopted by God when the experiment had issued in complete proof of the helplessness of our race. "In the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God"—this defines both the nature and result of the experiment. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"—here you have the course pursued when the experiment had been sufficiently made. Give us your attention, my brethren, whilst we endeavour to handle in succession these topics of discourse.

Now, in strict truth, this earth was never so utterly left to itself as to have been entirely destitute of assistance from the Father of light. Even if you leave out the bold and decisive exhibition of His eternal power and Godhead, which St. Paul affirms to have been always

derivable from the visible splendours of creation, we must allow that ancient traditions were never wholly obliterated, but were borne with them by mankind in their various dispersions. Hence there remained amongst men, even in their lowest degradation, certain clues which, sedulously followed, would have conducted to God; so that, in no stage of the experiment, can we assert that complete desertion which would imply the shutting out of the least note and intimation from above. But all which the experiment aimed at was the showing that neither natural religion, nor traditional, was enough; so that, unless there came a new and specific manifestation of Deity, a ponderous moral darkness must for ever hang over the earth.

And it was just this experiment which was mightily carried on from the days of the first Adam to those of the second. Man was tried in every possible point. He was taken near the times of the original apostasy, when traditions might have been thought to have retained all their freshness; but he speedily corrupted his ways, becoming the rebel, and then the idolater. He was taken far off from those times, when traditions had been mutilated in their lengthened transmission, but when discoveries in science, and advances in civilization, might have seemed to make up for the loss of the fragments. But the farther his removal from the earliest days, the deeper and more degrading became his ignorance. Natural religion seems always to have taught him the existence of a God, and traditional, the necessity of expiatory sacrifice. In every land he has built his religious system on these two great and indestructible principles; but in no land has he produced any superstructure but one of folly and falsehood. Witness the Egyptian, worshipping the brute, and deifying the vegetable. Witness

the Grecians, witness the Romans, advancing in superstition as they advanced in civilization, multiplying their Gods as they enlarged their possessions. The experiment, we say, went on whilst man passed through almost every possible state of society. He was allowed to become pre-eminent in all those arts which throw a beauty and splendour over life. The Christian must still go back to the heathen, and sit at their feet, if he would be great in oratory, or in poetry, or make the marble breathe. And it might almost seem as if God had purposely bestowed the noblest intellect, the acutest and most soaring genius, gifting man with uncommon power for extending the boundaries of science and of taste, in order that to the end of time there might exist an overwhelming demonstration that, between the things of earth and those of Heaven, there lies so unmeasured a separation, that he who has strength enough for expatiating over the one, may never, with all his strivings, cross the frontier of the other.

For was there ever so mingled an exhibition of the strength and the weakness of man as that presented by the structure and the uses of some temple of antiquity? Had it been possible for one favoured with the revelations of later times to have entered the gorgeous sanctuary of some deity of heathenism, he might have gazed delightedly on the triumphs of statuary, and have felt that there remained nothing which the artist could achieve, outdoing the nobleness of the surrounding architecture. But when he found that art had thus exhausted itself in order to rear a structure in which some creature of fable, some hero of romance, some slave of vice, might be worshipped as the guardian of a city or province, and that the glorious building was consecrated to the rites of a foul and grovelling superstition, every feeling of admira-

tion would have instantly given way to a feeling of abhorrence; and the loathing, with which he must have turned from an almost brutal ignorance of religion, would have been heightened, rather than repressed, by the surrounding exhibitions of human science and skill. Thus the experiment was literally tried as to whether the world could by wisdom find out God. Men of the most commanding powers, of philosophizing and deep-thinking minds, turned eagerly and earnestly their investigations on the being and nature of Deity. And though we deny not that certain of these gifted individuals made occasionally, as it were, bold springs towards the upper region of light and truth, yet they brought back nothing more to their expectant fellow-men than a luminous doubt, or a splendid conjecture. Even on their own parts there was no casting away of the falsehoods and absurdities of a ponderous mythology. If in secret they might cherish a suspicion of the worthlessness of the popular religion, except as an engine of state, the suspicion never became sufficiently definite and strong to rouse them to the attempt of exposing delusion. And thus we might send out our challenge to all that was illustrious in the schools of the polished and best informed heathen; we might give in our tribute of admiration to their progress in art; we might listen to the lofty effusions of their poetry, and follow their philosophers through long trains of profound and brilliant speculation; but everywhere, from every quarter, and through every medium, must the same melancholy conviction be forced upon the mind; and this conviction would find expression in the words of our text, "The world by wisdom knew not God."

But this, you will say, touches only one point in the first assertion of St. Paul. Our text not only affirms the

issue of the experiment: it gives the making of the experiment as a proof or result of the wisdom of God: we must look carefully at this—how was it "in the wisdom of God," that "the world by wisdom knew not God?" We will briefly set before you certain ends which appear to have been subserved by God's leaving the world so long to its own endeavours; for these, if beneficial, will go to the showing that the making the experiment was well worthy the Divine wisdom. Now the grand attempt of the deist has always been to set up reason as an antagonist to revelation, to disprove all necessity for the one by ascribing great strength and prowess to the other. He will argue, that, if the Bible be altogether shut up, so that no reference whatsoever be made to its pages, he can still, by the strength of his own intellect, demonstrate the fundamental truth of the unity of Godhead. And we allow it to be perfectly true, that clear and satisfactory proofs may be arranged of this great principle, which apparently borrow nothing from the pages of revelation. But we contend, that, secretly and unconsciously, reason has been vastly strengthened by revelation, so that much which she now seems able to effect by herself lay wholly out of her power whilst left literally to herself. We uphold this from the incontestable fact, that reason did not make the discovery, so long as God kept back revelation. If she had fairly found out the truth, whilst alone in her struggles with the mysteries which surrounded her, we might concede to the deist that she possessed the strength for which he contends. But inasmuch as it was not till God Himself had made Himself known, that reason discovered that she did not need revelation, we contend that it must be revelation itself which has sharpened her faculties; and we tax the deist with that

basest ingratitude which stings the hand of a benefactor, when he would exalt into independence on revelation that reason which has drawn her best vigour from revelation.

But suppose that the world had never been left to its own wisdom, suppose that, as fast as men colonized different sections of the globe, God had provided them with specific revelations, so that there should have been no opportunity for that forgetfulness or corruption of early traditions which left man to work his own way in the discovery of truth—then, as is very evident, the actual feebleness of reason would never have been proved; what she was able to do, being secretly assisted, would have been set down as what she was able to do without any assistance at all. Thus the circumstance of an instant and uninterrupted revelation would have naturally produced a bold denial of all need of revelation. If there were no period to which reference could be made, in which reason, left to her own might, showed her own weakness, the deist would stand on a vantage-ground whilst contending for the sufficiencies of natural religion. And we argue, therefore, that it was every way worthy the wisdom of God, to leave the stage clear, for a while, to human endeavour; so that not until, with many painful and almost desperate strivings, reason had fruitlessly sought after knowledge, should revelation appear upon the scene, and open up the unexplored wonders. God thus left the world to work out its own demonstration that a revelation was necessary; and forasmuch as the experiment thus took away even speciousness from deism, who will deny that the experiment was altogether worthy of an infinitely wise Being? In other words, who will deny that it was "in the wisdom of God," that "the world by wisdom knew not God?"

But, to examine a little more closely. If the experiment under review had not been made, we must adopt one of two suppositions. We must either suppose the whole world to have been placed under the same typical dispensation with the Jews, or we must suppose the Incarnation and Crucifixion of Christ to have taken place immediately upon the fall of Adam, and that the preaching of the Gospel accompanied each dispensation of the great human family. For you must all see that, if the world had never been left to itself, it must either have been put on the same footing with the Jews, who, alone, were not left to themselves, or have been brought at once into possession of the whole plan of redemption. We will briefly show you the disadvantages of both these suppositions, and then leave you to infer the advantages of the experiment which is under review. You are to remember that, from the time of the calling of Abraham, the Jews have been the standing miracle of the world. The surprising manner in which God has walled them off from every other nation has, in all ages, constituted a proof, which was hardly to be resisted, of a superintending Providence busying itself with human concerns. There is nothing so striking as the history of the chosen seed, to which to make our appeal, when we would show that, in the depths of far-off times, the Almighty was carrying onwards a purpose which contemplated the well-being of the whole household of man. But suppose there had been nothing of the mysterious separation of Gentile from Jew, you take away the greatest miracle ever wrought upon our globe, and strip Christianity of the main part of that wonderful heraldry which bears incontestable witness to the truth of her pretensions. Had God left no portion of the world to itself—in other words, had He dealt with the rest

of mankind as He dealt with the Jew—you must see that there could have been, comparatively, no preparing of the way for the coming of the Saviour. Every nation possessing the same ritual as the Jewish, every temple set apart to the same figurative rites as the Temple at Jerusalem, you destroy at once the distinguishing characteristics of the legal dispensation, which confined it to a province, and rendered it unsuited to a widespread population. Indeed, we argue upon almost a vain supposition when we argue upon the presumed extension of the Jewish religion to the whole of mankind. The rites of this religion confined its solemnities to Jerusalem. It could not therefore have been given to other nations except by lifting the metropolis of each into the privileges of the metropolis of Judæa. And this is neither more nor less than supposing that no distinction had been instituted between Gentile and Jew, but that the men of every tribe had been placed under one and the same dispensation. But if you destroy the separation between Gentile and Jew, it is hard to see how there could have been that preparing of the way for the coming of Christ, which was most strikingly effected by God's successive dealings with the seed of Abraham. So that, if we can trace the workings of infinite wisdom in that long series of mystic types which foreshadowed the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world; and if we can feel that Christianity is now mightily advantaged through the having been preceded by the exclusive system of the Jewish religion—then we are in possession of no mean reasons with which to uphold the opinion, that not to have left the world to itself, but to have placed every other nation on a par with the Jews, would have been for the ultimate disadvantage of men; and that, consequently, the making the experiment was

the dictate of God's wisdom! that, in other words, and those the words of our text, it was "in the wisdom of God" that "the world by wisdom knew not God."

But admitting this, you will still urge the other point. Might not redemption have been perfected soon after the first transgression had been committed? and would not all necessity for the experiment have thus been removed? But there are many reasons for the opinion that wisdom would not have been shown in an earlier coming of the Redeemer of our race. Suppose that the Word had been made flesh immediately upon the rebellion of Adam, or during the days of the Patriarchs—then you leave no space for such a dispensation as the Jewish; and thus you withdraw from the Christian dispensation all that array of witness which is derived from the ranks of typical sacrifice. You do away, moreover, almost entirely with prophecy. The great marvel of the prophecies which bear upon the work and person of Jesus, is that they were delivered by a succession of men, rising up at long intervals, and each becoming more minute in his predictions as he stood more nearly on the threshold of the Advent. We now set boldly against the unbeliever this array of unconnected individuals, each speaking by the Spirit of the Most High; and we feel that we obtain from their united testimony a support to our religion which is not to be borne away by all the inroads of scepticism. But the supposing that Christ might have appeared upon earth, just after evil had gained footing on its surface, involves the removal of these prophetic harbingers, and brings down the Redeemer, unheralded by any line of messengers who might prepare men for the coming of a deliverer. And feeling what a loss would be thus sustained by Christianity, we feel that there was wisdom

shown in an opposite arrangement; so that, although this involved the leaving the world a long while to itself, it was finally for the world's advantage that Jesus was not born in the infancy of its guilt.

Nor is this the only reason. It may even be questioned whether such a scheme as that of our redemption could have been perfected in the earlier days of human existence. It required a state of society which could hardly have been found whilst the world was yet young. There must be misery enough to give scope for the benevolent workings of superhuman power, and wickedness enough to deal out ignominy and death to the unwearied and illustrious Benefactor. And perhaps such a combination could hardly have been found, had there not been the downfall of some great national expectation, so that national feeling might be vehemently, though, to all appearance, unnaturally, turned against Him, in whose person met the fulness of might and the fulness of mercy. But time was needed for the building up an expectation whose downfall was to be thus instrumental to the carrying on the scheme of our redemption. And thus, the asking why Christ came not in the earlier days of human transgression is virtually the asking why the whole plan of deliverance was not differently constructed, and differently put in motion: if, therefore, there was wisdom in the plan, there must have been wisdom in the delay: showing you that it was "in the wisdom of God" to defer to a late period the incarnation of the Word, we equally show you that it was "in the wisdom of God," to leave the world for a long season to itself; in other words, we prove to you that it was worthy of God to ordain the experiment which we have been engaged in reviewing; and this is the proving to you, in the language of our text, that it was

"in the wisdom of God" that "the world by wisdom knew not God."

But let us now turn to the description which our text gives of the process employed by God when the experiment had demonstrated the helplessness of mankind. "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The passage might, perhaps, be more literally rendered, "It pleased God by the foolishness of the proclamation to save them that believe." The representation is just that of the preacher's office being like the office of a herald or crier, whose only business it is to publish with loud voice the notices given into his hands. And if things may be described according to the aspect which they wear in the eyes of the great body of mankind, then will "foolishness" be the term by which God's method of evangelizing the world is characterized. He sends not forth His servants to batter down idolatry with the ponderous engines of learning and logic. He commands them not to fight His battles with the heavy weapons of science and oratory. His only commission to them is, that they make such a proclamation as this, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." And against the simplicity of this commission reason will rise up in pride and indignation, asking whether it is at all to be expected that ancestral superstitions, and deep-rooted prejudices, will give way before so trifling a machinery, and deciding that only the foolish can look for success as the issue. But, as the Apostle soon after declares, "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Thus it has been ordered, and thus it has come to pass, that, by the proclamation, the simple, unredeemed proclamation, the conversion of mankind is ordinarily affected. They who

have laboured amongst barbarous and idolatrous tribes can bear witness to this. The cross has been erected; the dying Mediator has been displayed; and a proclamation has gone forth, that if they whom the fiery serpents had stung would but look, they should be healed. This method, decried indeed by reason and despised by philosophy, being the method which God appoints, has proved to be the method which God will honour. And where many a well-equipped champion of evidences and systems would have come back from the field, leaving it still covered with the abominations of a foul superstition, there has the simple and straightforward missionary won noble victory by keeping fast to his proclamation: he has swept the scene clear of the long retinue of darkness, with no other engine than his office of herald, and by the single pointing to Christ as "delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

Not that we would undervalue the evidences of Christianity. But we know that there is all the difference between conversion of the head and of the heart. You might sit down with a man, and argue him into an intellectual persuasion that Christianity has God for its Author, and yet leave him well-nigh as far removed from any saving acquaintance with Christ, as whilst he arrayed all his strength against the outworks of our faith. The heart may remain in its shroud of insensibility, when you have torn from the head the veil of infidelity; for the apparatus of reasoning is man's weapon of attack, and the foolishness of preaching is God's; and man's weapon may be applied, and do its work well, whilst God's is unused, and therefore no moral change is effected. And we are persuaded that the parts of sermons which go home to men's hearts are generally what may be called the proclamation parts. The preacher

may have reasoned well, and he may have declaimed well: the intellect of his audience may have been arrested, or the imagination dazzled, by the strength of his demonstration, or the splendour of his illustration; but the conscience has been stirred, and the heart has been stricken, when he has discharged simply the office of a herald, announcing, in the name of the living God, "The soul that sinneth it shall die," and "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Thus the opposition is most decisive between the process during the experiment, and the process after the experiment. Whilst the experiment went on of the world left to its own resources, it was by wisdom that the knowledge of God had to be sought. But when the trial had been made, and the result had shown the world's incapacity, then it was by foolishness. Oh, God would altogether stain the pride of man's reason; and therefore, after reason had striven most earnestly to break through opposing barriers, and gone bravely into battle with august and awful mysteries, showing herself mighty even in her defeat—then God came down upon reason with a most humiliating disclosure, and made known to her a way which, amid all her devisings, would have been for ever overlooked, and simply told her, in the words of St. Paul, "If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise."

The time would fail us were we to attempt to enlarge, as we might desire to enlarge, on a topic such as this. But you carry away with you a great lesson from the present assembling, if you depart assured and persuaded that reason must prostrate herself before the majesty of God's truth. We have nothing to do with proving this to you. We will not play the absurd part of addressing ourselves

to reason, and so flattering it, whilst we dwell on the necessity of humbling it. We merely tell you that it pleases God to use the foolishness of a proclamation. He has appointed a method. If, therefore, ye would know God, make trial of this method. If ye would remain ignorant of God, then set at nought this method. If ye think that ye can find out God by yourselves, and that ye can understand the Bible by yourselves, and that ye can gain eternal life by yourselves, then devote yourselves to the endeavour; give all—nerve, and sinew, and limb—give all to the task; conquer where the sages of Athens were mastered, triumph where the wise men of Rome were defeated. But if there be a voice and a witness in the overthrow of generation after generation, then give ye ear to the foolishness of a proclamation, "Ye are not sufficient of yourselves to think anything as of yourselves; but your sufficiency is of God." Seek ye then that wisdom which is from above. Seek it in the use of appointed means—in the prayerful study of the Bible, in diligent attendance on the public ordinances of religion. And oh, that we may all know God in this life! Know Him in the next we must, whether we die the death of the righteous, or go down into the grave of the impenitent. But it may be knowledge that shall consume and confound: the knowledge of infinite attributes, coming in upon the soul, each with its goad, and each with its scourge. Ye have failed, ye must fail, in the experiment of knowing God by *wisdom*. But, oh, dare not the experiment of knowing God by *punishment*. Now, whilst He is still a pardoning God; whilst He still waiteth to be gracious; let me once more see whether the foolishness of a proclamation may not bring you to His feet. I am not arguing with you: I decline all debate: I do not stand here to prove anything

to you—call me illogical if you will; say that I give you nothing but rhapsody and declamation: but nevertheless hearken to me as to a mere herald, and carry away with you the proclamation which I am commissioned to utter —my first proclamation is, "The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men"—it should make you tremble; but my second proclamation should fill you with hope, "God hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

SERMON XVIII

KNOWLEDGE AND SORROW

"For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."—ECCLES. i. 18.

THIS is a statement which is broader and clearer to ourselves, because possessed of more knowledge, than it could have been to Solomon, by whom it was delivered. The boundaries of knowledge have been vastly extended, since this sentence was first uttered. Not only have there been great discoveries in philosophy and science, but you must take into account the additional mass of Revelation; so that knowledge—at least clear and satisfactory knowledge, of the grand scheme of redemption, and the mighty realities of eternity,—is granted unto us, but was denied to Solomon. We then have far larger means than had the monarch of Israel, of testing the truth of the maxim, "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." And we believe that there is an universality in this maxim which causes it to be applicable in every age, and to every individual. We do not, indeed, imagine that even Solomon intended to imply that it were better to be without the wisdom, since it must have grief as its accompaniment. Neither does it follow, that because in increasing knowledge I increase sorrow, no pleasure whatever is to be found in the acquisition of knowledge. The propositions are perfectly compatible, and must commend themselves

as such to every man's mind, that he who increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow; and yet that he who increaseth knowledge is thereby advantaged and profited.

We are persuaded, and we shall now go on to endeavour to show, that, "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." At the same time, we are equally persuaded that, in many instances, and especially in reference to the things of eternity, the increase of sorrow is the increase of happiness; and that, therefore, he alone consults his own interests, who seeks the increase in knowledge. With these preliminaries laid down, we come now to a very interesting inquiry. We will, in the first place, confine our attention to the present life; in the second place, we will extend it to the future: and in both cases we shall endeavour to show you with how great truth it may be said, "In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

Now it is a common observation, and one borne out by the experience of all who have been qualified to give witness, that it is the property of knowledge to humble a man, not to puff him up, or make him arrogant. You may take it as a rule, which you will seldom find falsified, that, where there is conceit, there is shallowness; and that the man who has palpably a high opinion of his attainments, and who moves through a circle in all the pride of a presumed intellectual superiority, is indebted to his not being well dissected and well sifted, for the reputation he enjoys and the attention he commands. We do not, indeed, say that the man of powerful talents will have no consciousness of their possession, or that the man of high attainments in knowledge will have no sense of the separation between himself and the great mass of his fellow-men. But we are clear that the feeling of relative

superiority will be altogether kept in check by that of absolute littleness. We are clear, that the powerful talents will have taught their possessor their own weakness; and that the high attainments will consist mainly in the finding out that what has been mastered bears no imaginable proportion to what remains unexplored. It is only he who knows little, who will think he knows much. He who, speaking comparatively, knows much, will set what he has learnt side by side with what he has not learnt, and, in place of admiring his knowledge, be confounded at his ignorance. There is nothing which, however hard of acquisition, shrinks into so small a space as knowledge when acquired. A library will seem an atom when the bookcase is the mind. So that we may lay it down as an ascertained fact, that the acquisition of knowledge is a humiliating thing. Each step only shows us that the plain is broader and longer than we had thought; and the further we advance, the further off seems the boundary.

Thus self-complacency at our progress is inconsistent with progress; for if it be progress to discover that we are no nearer the end, what cause of exultation can the making progress furnish? It is with the sphere of knowledge, as it is with a sphere of light—enlarging it, you enlarge equally the circumscribing sphere of darkness. But, if it be thus certain that the increase of knowledge is accompanied by, if not identical with a growing sense of absolute ignorance, what can be clearer than that "He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow?" The man who is consumed with a desire after knowledge, will give his days and nights to the exploring one of its departments, or the toiling up one of its heights. And if, with a free and vigorous step, he make his way across a wide breadth of the district, or raise himself to some towering summit,

will a feeling of satisfaction be uppermost in his mind? Not so. The advance made will be dissatisfying. The further the man has penetrated, the higher he has soared, the clearer view will he attain of the immenseness of the spreadings of knowledge; or, rather, the stronger will be his conviction that what has been investigated is as an unit to infinity, when compared with what has not been investigated. And we suppose it to have been the result of such a consciousness as this, that the loftiest genius, and the most varied information, have been often found allied with the deepest and most genuine humility.

Oh! it is a refreshing thing to turn away from the haughtiness and self-sufficiency of much of modern philosophy, and to behold with what chastened and meek dispositions those, whose names are a monument not to be overturned, carried on their searchings into the mysteries of nature. They measured their attainments by what was undone, and not by what was done; and thus always found a greater reason for confessing themselves ignorant, than for supposing themselves learned. It was not possible that the great spirit of a Newton should grow vain and conceited, as the fields of the firmament gave way to its searchings. Onwards, indeed, it stretched, leaving immeasurably behind the crowd of less gifted inquirers. But even what Newton learned, as he leapt, so to speak, from star to star, and from constellation to constellation; it was that each new mystery which he fathomed, seemed only as an antechamber to a deeper and darker, and that to exhaust systems were to find systems inexhaustible. And therefore, when he came down from some adventurous and splendid flight and brought in his hands the spoils of planets, and nations thronged round him and hearkened to his teachings, he was still characterised by all the

meekness and docility of a child; and, in place of the arrogance and overbearing which you might have looked for, as the produce of a mental greatness which drew the homage of a world, there was no trait by which the deportment of this mighty being was so strikingly marked as by a modesty, and even a diffidence, which was proof against success, and grew with triumph.

And we believe of Newton, and of others who have given a like demonstration, that high genius is not the parent of pride, nor great learning the nurse of haughtiness; we believe of them, that they found the increase of sorrow contemporaneous with the increase of knowledge; and that, as they pushed on in the discovery of truth, they became, at each step, more and more aware of the insignificance of what they knew, compared with what they did not know; so that to suppose them puffed up at their progress, would be to suppose them elated at their own ascertained backwardness. We think, for example, that, when the telescope and the microscope were first put into the hands of a philosopher, there was increase of knowledge hardly to be measured; but, at the same time, a corresponding increase of sorrow. There was increase of knowledge: distant worlds were brought near; whilst worlds were found in every atom and every water-drop. But, in enlarging the field of contemplation, man only learnt that the workmanship of God, like God himself, could never be explored. Man was never so baffled as at the moment when he most signally triumphed. No doubt it was a vast triumph when science put into his hands an apparatus by which he could gaze upon stars which had never been beheld by his forefathers, and carry himself into far-off regions which had never before been surveyed by any of his line. And we are far from saying that there is not,

or that there ought not to have been, an emotion of gladness, when long-hidden depths of the azure laid bare their secrets, and the children of this earth were allowed to look in, and survey a new assemblage of worlds. But what has been the great lesson derived from this privilege; and what have men been most emphatically taught by the discoveries to which the telescope has helped them? Certainly, if we have learnt anything, we have learnt that the universe is of an immenseness which overpowers imagination. We have learnt that, in all probability, if we could transport ourselves to the most distant star which the optician has brought within the ranges of our vision, we should seem no nearer than at present to the outskirts of creation; but that, stretching gloriously beyond, there would be the august fields of another district of immensity, sprinkled with constellations and burning with Godhead. We have learnt that our own system, with all its wonderfulness and all its magnificence, is possibly little more than a point amongst the masses of the Creator's architecture; and that, if there came out an edict that it be swept away, there would be left no perceptible blank in that unbounded expanse which serves as a stage for the display of Almightiness. And if such are the lessons which have been taught men by the telescope, surely the very apparatus which most increased his knowledge most showed him his ignorance. He was not only taught how little he knew before, but how little he would be able to know after. Would not then the increase of knowledge be attended by an increase of sorrow? Would not the very boundlessness of creation, which he gathered from the discoveries of the telescope, and the fact, made known to him by the microscope, that, in the minutest subdivision of space, there was the furniture and population

of an universe—would not these, whilst filling him with admiration of the workings of Omnipotence, have filled him also with regret at the feebleness of his own powers? Would they not have conveyed to him an idea, such as he could not have otherwise attained, of the bitter vanity of the hope of embracing within the range of his investigation all the marvels and all the grandeur of nature? and what motto, therefore, would he have felt disposed to grave on an apparatus which amplified, indeed, vastly the sphere of his contemplation, but which taught him that, when amplified, the sphere was but a sand-grain, which, assisting him to be a learner, told him he would never be a proficient; if not the motto of our text, "In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow?"

And in matter of fact the earliest and at the same time the most awful, lesson ever given to this creation, was that with the increase of knowledge should be the increase of sorrow. It was the tree of Knowledge on which grew the forbidden fruit, by the eating of which our first parents forfeited innocence. It was the hope of an increase of knowledge which moved Eve to the act of disobedience; Satan telling her, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil;" and the woman perceiving that the tree was "to be desired, to make one wise." And, thus moved, she ate of the fruit, and gave to her husband and he did eat also. The hope was realized; and the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew good and evil. But, oh, it was a fatal knowledge! There has not been the woe in the long and dark catalogue of mortal afflictions; there has not been the tear shed, nor the sigh heaved, nor the shroud woven, nor the grave dug, which must not be referred to the acquisition of knowledge as

its producing cause. There was the increase of knowledge; but with it, and consequent on it, there was the birth of sorrow and grief so soon as it saw the light. And although it were wrong to argue that the increase of knowledge is now the increase of sorrow, on the same account that it was in the case of Adam and Eve, yet we cannot but think that God fastened for ever the same penalty on knowledge, in order that there might be a memento of human apostasy. It was sin in our first parents to seek the increase of knowledge; and the sorrow came as the punishment of the sin. Of course, we do not say that it is sin in us to seek knowledge; neither, therefore, do we say that the sorrow is a punishment for the seeking. But it is certain that the appointment under which we are placed, is nothing but the original appointment continued, and that from his first creation man has been subjected to the law, that to increase knowledge should be also to increase sorrow. And thus hath God ordained that men should, as it were, carry about in themselves a memorial of the first act of rebellion, and that there should be written in their own daily and continued experience a kind of history of the fall of their race. We suppose it to be simply because we are fallen beings, that knowledge and sorrow must grow together. Once delivered from the trammels of corruption—standing as the sons and daughters of the Resurrection—we know that the penalty shall be for ever removed; and that, as one field after another of glorious intelligence is given to our search, and we expatiate over mighty tracts of cleared-up mysteries and developed purposes, each accession to our wisdom will be an accession to our happiness. As we join the assembly of the just made perfect, and catch the flashings of Deity which circulate through the rejoicing groups, we shall find and feel

that, though the knowledge of God and of Christ is literally inexhaustible, the rapture as well as the business of eternity shall lie in the searching deeper, and the soaring higher. But until our every faculty shall be finally regenerated; until, in all its length and breadth, the curse is taken off from men; if we have knowledge, we must have it with the original penalty. Adam, it may be said, won for us the knowledge of good and of evil: but then he won it by disobedience, and therefore he annexed to it sorrow. And now, in ascertaining that much wisdom is much grief, I am only ascertaining myself the child of the apostate. I look upon the thorn and the thistle which the earth brings forth; I see the fixedness of the institution that, in the sweat of his face man shall eat bread; I hear the wailing of the orphan, and the cry of the oppressed; I behold disease and death holding lordship over man: and when all these signs of a stricken and burdened creation have forced on me the remembrance that I belong to a tribe which has thrown off allegiance, I no longer marvel that if I would have wisdom I must also have grief. What then? Is there no exception? None, we believe, none! It holds good of religious knowledge, as well as of worldly, that to increase it is to increase sorrow. Religious knowledge may be resolved into knowledge of one's self, and knowledge of God in Christ. No man knows anything of himself but the man who is enabled to examine himself by the light of the Holy Spirit. And as self-knowledge increases, must not sorrow also increase? What is this knowledge but the knowledge of corruption? the knowledge of the deceitfulness of the heart? the knowledge of one's own depravity? He who is increasing in knowledge of himself, is he not possessed of a growing sense of his own weakness, his own obduracy, his own

ingratitude? He will not seem to himself to be growing better: the proof that he grows better, is that he seems to himself to grow worse. And day by day the Holy Spirit will show him some new and foul chamber of imagery in the heart. Day by day, this celestial agent will unveil some fresh deformity, and lay bare some cherished and unsuspected evil. And though it be most wholesome and most necessary that we be thus taught ourselves, can it be denied that there is something painful and grievous in the lessons which are furnished? Oh! if, up to his dying day, a Christian must be increasing his knowledge of himself; and if this increasing knowledge be an increasing sense that, in spite of all that has been done for him, he is a rebellious, sin-loving, ungrateful creature—will it not come to pass that, the more he knows of himself the more will he lament over himself? and will it not, therefore, be emphatically true that, "In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow?"

And, in like manner, with respect to knowledge of Christ, there will be just that contemporaneous increase which we are setting ourselves to discover. I must know, experimentally know, that Jesus died for me, before I can know anything of the hatefulness of sin. And when a man is enabled to look by faith to the Lamb of God, bearing his sins in His own body on the tree—and this it is to know God in Christ—then alone will he entertain a genuine and heartfelt sorrow for sin. And the more earnestly he gazes, the more he contemplates the dignity and innocence of the Victim, the more he ponders the mystery that a Being, who was one with the Father, should have been given up to be an execration and a sacrifice—the more disposed will he be to abhor and

reproach himself, and the more will he bewail his own guiltiness, which demanded so awful an expiation. It is not the man who sits down to compute, by an abstract calculation, the evil of sin, who will ever attain a real knowledge of sin. Knowledge of sin is and must be the knowledge of Christ—the cross of the Redeemer being the only gauge, so to speak, by which iniquity can be measured. If I would know the disruption between the Creator and the creature, I must estimate it by the machinery through which reunion was effected. And the man therefore who knows Christ, and who has closed with Him as a Redeemer, he alone knows anything of the enormity and heinousness of sin. And as this man makes his pilgrimages to Gethsemene and Calvary, and stands by the cross, and marks the agonies of the immaculate Surety, in his last wrestlings with principalities and powers, oh, he will be increasing his knowledge of God's justice, of God's holiness, yea, of every divine attribute answering itself, and satisfying itself, in the work of redemption: but, as this knowledge increases, as the man learns more and more the vastness of the interference made on his behalf, the greater will be his sense of the overflowing love which prompted and effected his rescue: and the greater his sense of the love of the Redeemer, the more ardent, in return, will be his own love of the Redeemer: and oh, if, as knowledge increases, love increases, will he not loathe more intensely and bewail more bitterly, the sinfulness which nailed the Lord of Glory to the tree? Yea, and will it not continually happen, that, as his soul is most elevated with contemplation of Christ, and the fullest assurance possesses his spirit of a saving interest in the finished work of atonement—will it not, we say, continually happen,

that, at moments such as these, when knowledge is at the highest, contrition for sin will be most bitter and deep? and will there not thus be given a proof, uttered in sighs, and written in tears, that even when the knowledge is the knowledge of God in Christ, "In much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow?"

Therefore we affirm generally of knowledge, that you cannot acquire it, and not at the same time acquire some fresh cause of regret and anxiety. If it be knowledge of nature, the farther you advance, the more you are dissatisfied: for the more hopeless appears the pursuit. If it be knowledge of character, you must think worse and worse of yourself and your fellow-men. If it be knowledge of literature, you have trouble in keeping as well as in gaining: what is worthy of being retained, you will find slipping from your memory; what ought to be dismissed, will be fastened in with nails. If it be knowledge of the world, it consists in discovering hollowness where you had expected solidity, selfishness under the mask of generosity, daggers in smiles, and treachery in abundance. And if it be knowledge of God, still, as we have shown you, the more we know the more cause we have for self-abhorrence and bewailing; so that still, what is it to increase knowledge if not to increase sorrow? Yes, the text holds good of religious knowledge as well as of worldly. In neither case do we argue that the knowledge is unattended by joy and advantage. The telescope and the microscope ministered gladness to the philosopher; and they helped him to explore a thousand before-hidden wonders; though all the while teaching him the dwarfishness of his highest possible attainments, they made him sorrowful by showing that perfection would be

always out of reach. And when the spiritual telescope is put into our hands, and we direct it to the home of the justified, and lovely things, and rich, and sparkling cross, the field of view—or, when we are equipped with the spiritual microscope, and can look into ourselves, and see a world of iniquity in the tiniest motes which float in the mind's recesses—do we say that it is other than delightful to catch glimpses of the land of promise, other than profitable to be helped to the scrutiny and anatomy of the heart?

Each kind of knowledge is delightful, and each is profitable; but, at the same time each furnishes material of sorrow. It is delightful to hold the telescope, and to see, by the lenses of faith, the domes and the pinnacles of the heavenly city: and it is also profitable, thus to occupy the vision with the saints' inheritance; for, looking on the recompense, we shall be animated to the toil. But who ever surveyed the palaces of the faithful, without self-reproach at the little influence which things eternal have upon him, when compared with things temporal; and without a painful consciousness, that, though a King's son, and an heir of glory, his deportment is often such as if slavery were his choice, and corruption his element! Nothing so shows a man his own coldness, his own backwardness, his own insensibility to the high destinies of the redeemed, as a view of heaven. He cannot behold the reserved joys, and not feel that he deserves to lose them, for the slight hold which, after all, they have on his affections. And the clearer his view, the stronger will be this feeling; so that, whilst he is enraptured at the disclosures of the telescope, yea, and excited by them to exertion, he will be covered with shame, and full of grief, at his own lukewarmness in the pur-

suit of what is infinitely desirable; and thus will it come to pass, that, though there is joy, and though there is profit, "in increasing knowledge he will increase also sorrow." And if, laying down the telescope, he take up the microscope, and subject his own heart to the magnifying power, then, we need not tell you that it is profitable for him to be informed of the depth and extent of corruption; and we need not tell you that it is delightful for him to be thus informed, seeing that the nature of the instruction proves God's Spirit to be the instructor, and any proof that we are taught of the Spirit is too precious to be bartered for a universe: but neither, at the same time, need we tell you that it is a saddening thing to be shown one's own vileness, vileness resisting all the processes of sanctification; and that thus, though with the moral microscope as with the natural joy and profit are gained from its showings, it remains true of both, that, in increasing knowledge, they increase also sorrow.

We strive not to win you by false pretences. We own, that, in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, you will increase sorrow, seeing that assuredly you will increase knowledge. But with this increase of sorrow, there shall be that serenity of spirit, that counterpoise of joy, which will still make it true that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness." The difference between the Christian man and the man of the world, is, that our text applies to the Christian only in this life: it shall apply to the worldly through eternity. Both shall increase in knowledge for ever and ever. But, in increasing knowledge, the redeemed shall increase joy, each new discovery sending a fresh wave of delight through the shining assembly. But to the lost, to increase knowledge shall be for ever and for ever to increase sorrow. Know-

ledge shall increase; but knowledge shall be sorrow. They shall know more and more that they were their own destroyers—and that is sorrow. They shall know more and more that God is just in punishing them, and that is sorrow—may none of you ever know how gnawing. Oh, seek that knowledge which leaves sorrow in the grave—not that which carries it into eternity. Yes, though there will be the contemporaneous increase of knowledge and sorrow, yet it is so certain that "they who sow in tears shall reap in joy," that we beseech you to make it your prayer for yourselves, as it is ours for you, that you may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

SERMON XIX

THE UNJUST STEWARD

"And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods."—St. Luke xvi. 1.

SURPRISE is often felt in regard of this parable, because a wicked man, whose conduct deserves the severest blame, is held up as, in some sense, an example to the disciples of Christ. This steward, as you will remember, had been accused to his master of wasting his goods, of dissipating his property, by mismanagement, or fraud, or extravagance. When the master, in consequence of what he heard, had taxed the steward with his fault, and commanded him accordingly to prepare for resigning the stewardship, there was no attempt whatsoever at vindication: the steward offered no excuse; and we conclude that he was thoroughly conscious of the justice of the charge, and knew the proofs to be so strong that explanation was hopeless. When he thus found himself on the eve of being ejected from a lucrative position, he naturally cast about to consider what means of subsistence would be at his command. It does not appear that he had accumulated any property for himself. Either his fault had not so much been peculation as profligate expenditure; or what he had dishonestly acquired he had lavishly squandered—but, in any case, he was likely to

be exposed to actual starvation through losing the stewardship: his own account of his prospects was, "I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed."

And now we soon see how utterly void this man was of all moral principle. Too proud to beg, he determines to cheat, framing a plan for so concluding his stewardship that it might provide for him through the rest of his life. He called together the debtors of his lord, who are represented as having been indebted not in money but in various articles of common consumption such as corn and oil. He asked the first, "How much owest thou unto my lord?" and, on being told "a hundred measures of oil," bids him sit down quickly, and make out his contract for fifty. He then took a similar course with the second debtor; and probably reduced in like manner all the outstanding bonds. With as much adroitness as profligacy, he thus contrived to place the debtors under a personal obligation to himself, computing that they would hardly refuse him the means of subsistence when his lord should have dismissed him from the stewardship. He did not reckon merely on their gratitude—for this would have been a poor dependence where there was so much moral worthlessness: but he made it for the interest of the debtors to receive him into their houses; privy as he was to the cheat which they had practised, he could, at any moment, if they displeased him, turn informer against them, and avenge himself probably by effecting their ruin. And this shrewdness, or prudence, obtained for the steward the praise or admiration of the master: indignant though he must have been when he came to know the fraud by which he had been wronged, he could not withhold his confession that the steward had acted with singular skill,

or shown himself marvellously an adept at securing his own interests.

Accordingly you read, "And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely." Persons are often staggered by this statement, concluding that Christ Himself is here meant by "the lord," and marvelling that our Saviour should commend what was manifestly and flagrantly unjust. But it is evident from the original that it is not Christ, but the master of the steward, who is here represented as commending or praising. Christ does nothing more than relate what took place: He is simply the historian, till, having concluded the narrative, He proceeds to draw the moral, in the words, "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness." Though if Christ Himself had commended the steward, there would really have been nothing startling in the fact. On what ground is the commendation given? Simply on that of the wisdom, or cunning, displayed. And the subjoined reason, or proposition, makes this ground yet more evident—"for the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." "The children of this world are wiser, more prudent, for their generation, than the children of light." They are greater adepts at providing for their temporal interests—a proposition accurately illustrated by the history in question. And surely one may acknowledge, or commend, sagacity, prudence, or skill, without being supposed to approve the action in which it is displayed. I may admire the courage of a pirate: I may applaud the nautical science which he exhibits: but would any one therefore consider that I admired, or applauded, piracy? Because I commend the cleverness which a robber has shown in working

his way into a house, is it for a moment imagined that I commend him for robbing? There is all the difference between praising a man for what he does, and praising his manner of doing it. I may abhor the action, and yet admire its wisdom: I may detest the fraud, yet allow its ingenuity.

Let it never then be thought—for no opinion could be more groundless—that this parable of the unjust steward goes, in any measure, to the giving approval to wickedness, as though it sanctioned, by commending, what was base and dishonest. The steward gains no approval, except as being shrewd and keen-sighted in regard of his temporal interests; and simply on the principle that a Christian may often take a lesson from a worldling, is his history given as reproaching the disciples, if less on the alert to secure the true riches, or illustrating the manner in which even they might turn temporal wealth to account. The steward could so contrive to make use of his stewardship as to secure himself a home amongst those whom he benefited, when his master should have ejected him from his house. Let this suggest to Christians—stewards as they are rather than proprietors of riches—that there is a way of employing their wealth, which shall make it instrumental to their admission into Heaven, when death shall eject them from their stewardship: they may so use worldly riches—here called "the mammon of unrighteousness," false wealth, that is, as opposed to the true, "the pearl of great price"—as to surround themselves at the Judgment with advocates and friends, who shall "receive them into everlasting habitations."

It appears, then, that the chief drift, or design, of this parable of the unjust steward, is to set Christians on regarding temporal wealth as a trust—a trust which may

be so worked as to gain for them friends at their final account. The very thing done by the steward may be done by the Christian: in the prospect of dismissal from his stewardship, he managed to place others under an obligation which would bind them to the giving him shelter and sustenance: and the Christian is distinctly told by our Lord, that he has it in his power, and should make it his endeavour, to do the very same—to secure himself friends, through the mammon of unrighteousness, who, when he dies, may receive him into everlasting habitations.

We must pause awhile upon this. There is nothing on which true-hearted Christians are more sensitive—and that, too, very justly—than on any darkening or narrowing of the great doctrine of justification by faith. They are so thoroughly aware that anything of merit must be excluded from human actions, and that, from first to last, salvation must be purely of grace, that they instinctively recoil from statements which, in any sense, give the justifying office to works, as though, if not absolutely false, they might so readily be abused, that it were wiser to abstain from their open avowal. But nothing can be clearer, than that the scheme of theology must be radically wrong, which feels uneasy when in contact with any portion whatsoever of the Bible. The doctrine which we take for that of justification by faith, cannot be this doctrine, as given by evangelists and apostles, if it shrink from admitting that we shall be judged by our works, that good works shall be rewarded, even as evil shall be punished, when the Judge of quick and dead shall determine men's everlasting portions. For it is undeniably the uniform representation of Scripture, that we shall be put upon trial for the things done in the body; that a book is

kept, in which our every action is scrupulously registered; and that hereafter this book shall be opened to furnish the evidence upon which we shall be acquitted or condemned.

There is no inconsistency between such a representation as this, and the doctrine that salvation is of grace through faith; for faith is the principle whence good works must spring; and these works are recorded, not of debt, but of grace—what we shall receive will be all gift; but, nevertheless, it will be proportioned to the degree in which we have here brought forth the fruits of faith; and therefore will it partake of the nature of reward, though those fruits never partook of the nature of merit.

And whilst there is thus no infringement of the doctrine of grace, by the doctrine, Scripturally stated, of the reward of good works, we ought to have no hesitation in taking, in their largest and most literal sense, those inspired representations which associate with the last judgment our every deed of benevolence. Are we to be afraid of broadly asserting, that, if, actuated by love of the Redeemer, we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick, we shall be laying up a recompense for ourselves, or securing accessions of happiness in the "inheritance incorruptible, and which fadeth not away"? Are we to be afraid of this, when Christ Himself, in His great drama of future judgment, gave us the single reason why the righteous should be summoned to glory, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in"? Undoubtedly everything is here made to hinge upon motive: the righteous are rewarded because their benevolence had distinct respect to Christ; so that, in ministering to the least of His brethren they were vir-

tually ministering to Him. But this leaves untouched the fact, that their charity furnished the test or criterion of trial: the sole thing inquired into was their active benevolence: and we cannot therefore err in inciting you to charitable deeds, by assuring you that even the cup of cold water, given in the name of a disciple, shall in nowise lose its reward. And if the parable before us place the matter under a yet stronger point of view, there is nothing but what the same principles of reasoning will equally vindicate. If deeds of benevolence are to be acknowledged and recompensed by Christ, when "He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation," what is to prevent the parties, benefited by those deeds, from appearing as witnesses, to give evidence on the side of the righteous by whom they were wrought? I know not, and no one can profess to determine, in what degree the Scriptural representations of the final assize are to be regarded as figurative, and in what they should be received as describing the actual occurrence. Whether or not there will be anything analogous to the proceedings at a human tribunal, to the bringing a prisoner to the bar, the reading his indictment, the putting him on his defence, the summoning and the examining of witnesses—on this it were presumptuous to deliver any positive opinion: but, at least, we may be sure that the judicial proceedings amongst ourselves furnish the nearest resemblance which our present faculties can admit, to what will take place at the Judgment; and that consequently we come as close as is possible to the truth when we draw our illustrations from our own courts of law.

Put, then, the righteous upon trial—a trial, be it carefully observed, in which the matter for inquisition is to be their active benevolence; and why should not those

whom their charity has succoured be considered as crowding forwards to give evidence? These are the parties of whom they made friends, by employing for their benefit "the mammon of unrighteousness;" and why should they not now throng the tribunal, advocates of the compassionate as having once been objects of their compassion; and thus prove "the right"—it is a Scriptural expression—"the right" which the charitable have, to eat of the tree of life, and enter by the gate into the city?" It is a glorious, an animating, prospect, which may thus be held out to the possessors of wealth, who, whilst trusting for acceptance exclusively to the merits of Christ, show their love to the Saviour in kindness to their fellow-men. Their alms and their sacrifices shall not be forgotten. They shall not want witnesses, when put on their defence, and required to prove that faith was an active principle, and influenced them continually in their capacity as stewards. The many whom they have succoured in sickness, the starving whom they have fed, the naked whom they have clothed, the ignorant whom they have instructed—these seem to stand at the gate of Paradise, not only to welcome them, but to claim their admission. O noble retinue, glorious company of attendants! The great ones of the earth they compass themselves here with courtiers and guards: but death strips them of their pomp: and, if they have not wrought for a heavenly crown, whilst wearing an earthly, they must stand alone at the Judgment, with none to sustain them, and perhaps with thousands to dismay. Not so the Christian who devises liberal things. He surrounds himself with attendants: but they are "the halt, the maimed, the blind," those "ready to perish," and those "who sit in darkness and the shadow of death." Already might he say of himself, as did Job, "When the ear

heard me, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." And death has no power to deprive him of these attendants. Death does but send them forward to wait on him in another scene, a scene of magnificent terror and hope: they shall crowd to his side when he appears at the tribunal of God, with nothing to plead but the merits of Christ, and shall be so instrumental to the proving the workings of a justifying faith, and therefore to the establishing his title to a place in the Kingdom, as to show to the latter, that, according to the parable before us, "friends, made of the mammon of unrighteousness" may receive those who make them into "everlasting habitations."

But we would now engage your attention, for a few moments, with that portion of the parable which relates the adroit management of the steward, in securing to himself the goodwill of his lord's debtors, though at the sacrifice of all honesty in respect of his lord. We have already set before you the general drift or design of the parable; and we now wish to see whether there may not be some lessons for ourselves in parts which are passed over as mere statements of facts—in short, whether the parable may not, too often, be accommodated to ourselves; whether there are no modern resemblances to the steward, as he pares down the debt, and thus gratifies the debtor by defrauding the lord. It must be supposed that the rich proprietor in the parable is none other than God, whose "is the earth and the fulness thereof," and who retains an inalienable right over the goods and possessions which he may entrust for a while to any of his creatures. And the steward, though he may personify, in the general, many men with whom God has placed some deposit, whether of wealth or talent, or influence, intend-

ing to bring him hereafter to a strict and solemn reckoning, may perhaps specially represent the minister of the Gospel, whose office it is to provide food for the household.

And too often, if the steward would be acceptable to the debtors, and secure their receiving him into their houses, he must keep out of sight the real amount of the debt, and allow men to extenuate the corruptions of nature, or magnify their own virtues and powers. And this is virtually the saying to them what was said by the unjust steward, "Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty."

There are two courses, either of which the minister may take when he has to deal with a sinner under conviction of sin. There is the severe, but Scriptural course of probing the wound—insisting unreservedly on the total corruption of nature, on the condemnation under which the man naturally lies, on his utter inability to gain pardon for a single one of countless offences which have been accumulating ever since he knew right from wrong, —and thus not suffering him to draw hope from the promises of the Gospel, until confounded at the sight of his worthlessness and ruin. We call this the severe, but Scriptural course. Owest thou a hundred measures? Nay, O man! add a hundred to that, and a thousand to that, and a million to that; and then confess it a proof of thine ignorance, that thou hast thought to calculate thy debt. We must have thee overwhelmed at the magnitude of the sum, ere we shall have thee prepared to commit thy cause thankfully and unreservedly to a surety. But there is another course which the minister may take, and one more agreeable to natural feelings. He may begin at once with quieting apprehensions. He may say, "The case is not

so bad as fears represent it: sins are unavoidable through the infirmities of our nature, and will not be too rigidly judged by the benevolent Creator. Dismiss, then, these exaggerated estimates of the sum which, as a transgressor, you are indebted to God, and doubt not but that, through repentance and amendment, the debt will be altogether cancelled. Yes, this is a course which may be, and but too probably often is taken with the debtor. It is what is described by the prophet as the healing the daughter of God's people slightly, saying, "Peace, peace! when there is no peace!" The wound is not probed; it is "healed slightly;" just skinned over, so that the evil remains, only is not so apparent. And tell me if, whenever such course be taken,—the minister paring down the descriptions of human corruptions, so that they may be less revolting to man's pride or self-sufficiency, or allowing the sinner to think that his sins have not placed him in the position of one who is utterly bankrupt and lost,—tell me whether there be not done the very counterpart to what is represented in the parable; whether the spiritual steward do not virtually gather together his lord's debtors, and say to the man who is indebted in a hundred measures, "Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty."

But in reviewing the parable of the Unjust Steward, we shall probably be expected to say something, as we will in conclusion, on the assertion, "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." You understand at once, that, by the children of this world, those are intended who give little or no attention to religion, centering their affections on earthly things, and their powers on earthly pursuits. By "the children of light," on the contrary, those are to be under-

stood who, professing and feeling themselves strangers upon earth, seek a better country, even a heavenly. And the children of this world are "wiser" than the children of light, not because the objects which they seek are better worth pursuit—the religious man is, in every case, the truly wise man, because he makes provision for the future, whilst the irreligious is, in every case, the truly foolish man, because he makes provision for nothing but the present. But where there is not superior wisdom in making a choice, there may be in pursuing the object on which desire shall be fastened. And here it is that the "children of this world" bear off the palm. If a man have turned his desires on the amassing of money, he will not suffer himself to be drawn aside from the business of accumulation. If ambition be his ruling passion, neither the seductions of voluptuousness, nor the ruggedness of the upward path, can make him withdraw his gaze from the shadowy prize which floats before him, and woos him on. In such cases there is fixedness and constancy of purpose; and this is wisdom: all the actions of these "children of this world" have a bearing, direct or indirect, on the master-object which has gained possession of their desires. But, alas! it is not thus—at least, in no such measure—with "the children of light." If you select the individual who seems to be advancing the most rapidly in piety, can it be maintained that he gives more than a divided attention to the things of eternity? or that he does not often, with his eyes open and his conscience awake, indulge himself in practices which he knows must militate against his growing in grace. The children of this world turn not aside from the main object proposed: the children of light are diverted by a thousand petty concerns. The one compel every lesser interest to do

homage to the greater : the others too often neglect the greater, that the lesser may be advanced. The one are so intent on their end, that striving for it seems their element : the others are so languid in their efforts, that but too often heart-work can hardly be traced. With whom, then, is wisdom, so far as wisdom is to be gathered from the constancy with which an end is pursued ?—with the children of this world, or with the children of light ? And yet they strive for a corruptible crown : we for an incorruptible.

Let us not bolster ourselves up with the thought of the inferiority being unavoidable. If the things of sense act, as we confess they do, at a decided advantage over those of faith, it is not in such measure as to excuse a thousandth part of the degree in which we are inferior in wisdom. The great secret of the difference lies, after all, in the weakness of our faith ; and the weakness of our faith is to be referred to the neglect, or formal use, of those means of grace which God hath appointed. Oh ! if we caught but a glimpse of Heaven—if the street of gold, and the robe of light, and the throne of crystal, were given to our gaze in their glory and loveliness—with what an elastic tread should we walk the earth ! with what a noble daring should we breast the storm, the breeze, the danger ! One bright rich glance of the greatness and gladness, of the bliss and beauty of immortality, and we should be ever in onward motion, battling with an enemy, or wrenching up a hindrance. And whence comes it that faith, the eye of the soul, able to receive and collect the beams of the far-off country, gives no vivid delineation of the eternal landscape, of the pure and clear river which flows from the throne, and of the tree of life which overhangs its stream ? There is no truer reply than that, by indulging in the forbidden or

neglecting the commanded, and the half-and-half renunciations of carnal pursuits, or by dull and cold using of instituted means, we take away, as it were, the strong glasses from the spiritual organ; and then, when we would look forth on the spreadings of the land, the mist is on the valleys and the cloud upon the hills. "All things are possible to him that believeth." Oh, then, for greater faith! greater faith may make the children of light as staunch in purpose, and therefore as wise, as the children of this world. How much, O debtor! owest thou unto my lord? A hundred measures. Nay, take thy bill, and write a thousand. Thou hast but to diminish thine account here, to diminish thy glory hereafter. Exaggerate, rather than depreciate the debt. Magnify the free grace of God; magnify it in what it now forgives and in what it reserves for you in Heaven. And believing in a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," you may yet so run the Christian race, as no longer to be put to shame by the worldly, in the eagerness with which they chase the shadow, or toil for a bauble.

SERMON XX

THE MAN BORN BLIND

"And, as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."—ST. JOHN ix. 1-3.

THERE can be nothing more unjust, as nothing more uncharitable, than the inferring a man's wickedness from his misfortunes. We do not, of course, mean to say that sin is never punished in this life. On the contrary, not only is all the suffering in the world the produce, more or less directly, of sin, but, in numerous cases, a particular suffering is the distinct result of a particular sin, whether following in the way of natural consequence, or immediately imposed by the just judgment of God. God allows many sins to pass without present retribution, and this is one great proof that there shall come a general judgment; but He also visits many sins with immediate chastisement, as though to leave us without excuse if we doubt or deny our living beneath His government.

Although temporal judgments may often be allotted by God in His character of supreme ruler, nothing could be more inaccurate than the making those judgments the evidences of men's characters; for they probably fall more to the lot of the righteous than of the wicked, inasmuch as it is in the present scene alone that the

righteous can be chastened—so that, if tribulation were taken as proof of wickedness, we should often be in danger of vilifying the good and canonizing the evil. Hence there was a great deal to be condemned in the rash question of the disciples with regard to the man born blind, "Who did sin, this man or his parents?" They displayed a censorious and uncharitable spirit, rashly concluding that, because there was suffering, there must have been sin. And yet many true principles were involved in their question. There is the principle, that all suffering may be traced to sin—than which, as we have already intimated, nothing can be truer. There is also the principle, that children often suffer for the sins of their parents—the disciples supposing it possible that the man may have been born blind as a judgment for some sin which the parents had committed. And however hard it may appear, however repugnant to our notions of equity, it is proved alike by the declarations of Scripture and the testimony of experience, that God often visits upon children the iniquities of their fathers. But what are we to say to the supposition of the disciples, that the man's blindness might have been God's judgment for some sin committed by himself? The man had been born blind, as they themselves state—how could any sin of his own have produced his being *born* blind? To this we can only answer that the Jews were, in a measure, tinctured with the doctrine of the transmigration of souls—with the doctrine which, as you know, is still held in Eastern countries, that the same soul passes successively into different bodies. If, then, the disciples had imbibed the popular belief, if they imagined that the soul of the blind man had pre-existed in some other body, they might naturally also imagine that the blindness was

in punishment of some sin of the soul, perpetrated in a former habitation. This, however, brings us to the considering our Saviour's answer to the question of the disciples, in which, as you will believe, lies our chief material of discourse. You observe that He immediately discards both the suppositions which the disciples had laid before Him, and gives a reason wholly differing from either, for the man's having been born blind: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." It will be well that we look at our Lord's answer under both points of view—first, as rejecting a false supposition, and secondly, as furnishing the true.

Now it can scarcely be necessary to point out to you that Christ could not have meant that neither had the man nor his parents committed any sin. They were sinners, like the rest of our race, and had incurred, by their sins, the just judgment of the Lord. His evident meaning was, that this particular visitation of blindness had not resulted from any particular sin, committed whether by the man or by his parents. The disciples imagined that there must have been some one special act or habit of evil, God's punishment of which consisted in the blindness of this unhappy individual. But this conclusion our Saviour peremptorily rejects. It might, in some cases, have been a just conclusion; but His superhuman knowlege informed Him that it was not in this.

Affliction may come upon a man, either in his own person or in that of some one of his family; but it may not, in the remotest degree, have been brought on him by any sin at which God would thus mark His displeasure, or for which He would thus exact punishment. And we hardly know a more interesting or consoling truth than

this, if you come to consider how it may be made to work amongst those who are "distressed in mind, body, or estate." For there is nothing more common with a Christian, when God visits him with a bereavement or trial, than that he anxiously inquires what particular sin he has committed, for which the bereavement or the trial is to be taken as the chastisement. And the inquiry is a wholesome one: it is but that which Job so pathetically urges, "I will speak in the bitterness of my soul; I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore Thou contendest with me." It becomes the Christian when he is in trouble, to "search and try his ways," that he may see whether some particular fault be not pointed out by the particular affliction. But he is not, with the disciples, to make sure, to assume, that the suffering has been produced by a sin. This is what so often aggravates affliction, and gives it a character which renders it intensely more difficult to endure. Visit a Christian mother, who has been suddenly deprived of a much-loved child—and, very probably, she is exclaiming, in the bitterness of her anguish, "Alas! I must have made an idol of that child: God would never have thus removed the child except to punish my idolatry; and thus, miserable that I am, the child has died for its mother's sin." And, undoubtedly, it is but too possible that the mother may be right; she may have made an idol of her child; and God, who is "a jealous God," has often to take rough ways of loosening our affections when we suffer them to grow entangled with the creature. But may not the child have died, and yet not have been made an idol? Yes indeed—"Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents." It does not at all follow, from the sudden removal of the child, that it has been made the object of an undue, inordinate

affection. There may have been other, and wholly different ends, proposed by the bereavement, than the correction of an idolatrous regard. If there have been this idolatrous regard, undoubtedly its correction is one of the proposed ends; and the sorrowing parent does right in considering whether or not she have deserved such correction. But what we insist upon is, that the bereavement is not necessarily any proof of the idolatry—whereas the heart-broken mother is almost sure to conclude that it is, and thus to write bitter things against herself, adding a new pang to affliction, a sharper and severer than the mere loss could cause.

It is the same with other afflictions—they may be, but they are not necessarily, God's judgments for particular offences. If a man be stripped of property, it does not therefore follow that he made a bad use of property: he may have made an excellent use, he may have thoroughly acted as a steward, keeping always in mind the account to which he would be called; and, nevertheless, for purposes known only to God, and irrespective altogether of anything criminal in himself, be reduced from affluence to want. And, with another man, there may be a frustration of plans, a disappointment of hopes, as though some thwarting influence were at work, and nothing which he undertook were allowed to succeed. Is it that this man does not "acknowledge God in all his ways," and that God baffles him, because relying on his own strength and sagacity? Again we say, it may be so; and we would have the Christian, who finds himself thus secretly withstood, examine with all diligence whether he duly seek, and depend on, the leadings of God's Spirit. But it is not necessarily so; the plans may be frustrated, and yet the plans may have been made with a most prayerful

appeal to Him who alone directeth man's way. And it is trying enough to find puposes thwarted—there is no need to make the trial severer by self-accusations and self-reproaches.

You see, then, to how valuable an end our Lord's answer may be used when taken simply as the rejection of the supposition of His disciples. We are far enough from wishing to dissuade Christians, when under affliction, from instituting and carrying on a most rigid process of self-examination. On the contrary, we hold it to be especially their duty, believing that what becomes them at all times becomes them then more than ever—the considering their ways, that they may see where they decline from the law of the Lord. But we would not have them suppose that each individual affliction must have originated from some particular sin. Nay, we would not even have them suppose that God's permitting them to be visited with trouble must mark, in the general, that they have been sluggish and lukewarm in the duties of religion. We constantly see Christians thus afflicting themselves in affliction; and often, as there is good ground to believe, with no sufficient reason. We tell them, therefore, on the authority of our text, that they may have been signal in trouble, without having been signal in sin; that all afflictions are not meant for chastisements, but that many have nothing whatsoever to do with the correction of faults, or the inculcation of duties. Oh! when trouble after trouble overtakes a believer, he may be sorely perplexed: he will say to himself, Why has all this befallen me? Of what sin is this grief the recompense? What part of my conduct does this sorrow point out as having incurred the anger of God? By what neglected duty, or what encouraged wickedness, have I brought on myself this or

that calamity? Nay, all these questions may be only the question of the disciples, a little varied by variation in circumstances, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" And it should be full of consolation to the disquieted Christian, that our blessed Saviour, by His reply, proved that there is not necessarily any direct connection between a grief sent by God, and a sin committed against Him, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

But this leads us to the considering the answer of Christ under the second point of view—as not only rejecting the false, but as furnishing the true, explanation, why the man had been born blind. It was not on account of any particular sin, whether in himself or his parents, that so grievous an evil had befallen the man; but only "that the works of God should be made manifest in him." The man had been born blind, for the distinct purpose, foreseen and foreordained of God, of furnishing a signal opportunity for the display of Christ's power, a display which the Pharisees would endeavour, by every means, to invalidate, though only establishing the more clearly the truth and the wonder of the miracle. Few of the miracles wrought by our Saviour are more valuable, as points of evidence, than this instance of His giving sight to the blind—not so much on account of the greatness of the action; though, as the man himself states, "Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind"—but because of the sifting inquiry to which the miracle was immediately subjected; the enemies of Christ having been all on the alert to detect some flaw in the alleged proof of His Divine mission, and the endeavour, with its failure, having been care-

fully and circumstantially recorded for us by the Evangelist And when so important a purpose was to be subserved by the blindness, we can well understand that God might have sent the blindness with distinct reference to such a purpose—for, undoubtedly, as much as this is implied by our Lord: it is not merely, that, having been born blind, God overruled the circumstance, so as to render the sufferer instrumental to His glory; but that He actually ordained, or produced, the blindness, that such an instrument might be ready for His Son in Jerusalem. Neither let it, for a moment, be thought that it was at all hard upon the man that, through no fault, whether of himself or of his parents, he should have been visited with so grievous a deprivation as that of sight: we may safely assume that God never allows any one to be ultimately a loser through endurances in His service: and, in this particular instance, the blindness seems to have brought the man to a knowledge of Christ as his Redeemer; and nothing more can be needed in proof that it was vastly for his benefit, in place of his injury.

But was it then only in so remarkable an instance, where there was so great an end to be answered, that calamity may be considered as appointed for the distinct purpose of a manifestation of God's words? Hardly so: the manifestation may not be so marked, nor as easy to be traced; but we may conclude generally, that where sorrows are not the chastisements of particular sins, they are for the advancement of God's glory, and the furtherance of His will. But what a wonderful view does this open before us of the appointments and distributions of Providence! Here is a child born blind —what a grief to the parents! How will their eyes fill with tears, as they look on the sightless eyes of their

little one! How long will they be in admitting the fact; how eagerly will they fancy that the child turns its eyes hither and thither, as if it took notice! Then, when there is no longer any resisting the melancholy evidence, what a consulting of physician after physician, what a trying of varieties of cure, till, the case being pronounced hopeless, there is nothing for it but to weep, and to wonder that so heavy a grief should have been allotted by God. Yet, all the while, God may have sent the blindness with as distinct a view to His own glory as when He strewed the firmament with those worlds of light on which this poor child is never to gaze—did I say never? Poor child, thou shalt have thine eyesight in a better land, where there are luminaries a thousandfold more glorious than those which now blaze on the canopy of Heaven! Here is a child born an idiot—far deeper grief than had it been born blind, deeper in proportion as mental vision is more precious than corporeal. With what intenseness of sorrow will the parents look on their idiot child—oh for some glance of intelligence in that dull and vacant eye! Oh for some ray of meaning, some gleam of soul, in that wintry smile which is even more distressing than a darkened brow! But in vain is it looked for: it comes not, though hope, which can feed upon air, has fought against the mournful fact, and often whispered, Surely there was mind in that look. The parents are at length shut up to the conviction that the lamp of reason is wanting in their child; and, in the piteousness of their grief, they are ready to exlaim, Woe is unto us! for what heavy sin has God sent us so heavy a sorrow? Yet, all the while, there may be nothing whatsoever of punishment: there may be only the providing for the manifestation of His own greatness and goodness, in God's having thus left the

child in intellectual night: ay, not more may He have had respect to His own glory, when creating bright and burning intelligences, than when making this young one's mind a perpetual blank—perpetual? nay, not so: idiots are idiots only upon earth: the lamp shall be kindled at the source of all light, and perhaps burn the brighter for having been so long without the irradiating beam.

And the same may be said of every case of defect or deformity. We do not sufficiently recognize the greatness of the common mercy of being perfect ourselves, or of our children being born perfect, in the several limbs and organs of the body. But parents recognise it when they have defect or deformity amongst their children. They feel it a sore visitation, and perhaps think that it marks God's anger at something in themselves, when a child is dumb, or deaf, or lame. Yet they may be utterly mistaken. The manifestation of His own works, and not the punishment of their sins, may have been contemplated by the Almighty, when causing their little one to enter the world in so crippled and deficient a condition. But what a view does it give us of God, that according to the doctrine laid down by Christ in the text, every child born defective or deformed, wanting in the ordinary senses or powers, may be regarded as having been born so through the distinct purpose and appointment of God, that it may serve for the manifesting the works of the Almighty! You understand God's manifesting Himself through what is perfect in its kind: but this is His manifesting Himself through what is imperfect! Amazing Being, who can be accomplishing the great ends of His universal government by means of the halt, the blind, the dumb, the maimed! What an army for the invisible Creator to make use of, the cripple, the idiot, the diseased! Yet does He not

employ these miserable objects, miserable in the sense of deserving the compassion of their less afflicted fellow-creatures? Is it merely by a stretch of imagination, or of faith, that we can suppose His works manifested through every deformed or deficient child? Surely not so. Just think of what is undoubtedly the fact, that the parents' interest in the deformed, or deficient, child, will generally be greater than in any other. A mother will tend upon her blind, or even her idiot boy, with an eager and unwearied affection, such as she hardly displays towards the rest of her children. And what a manifestation is this of the works of God! what an evidence that God hath provided for every emergency! We should have been without this touching proof of the resources laid up in human sympathy for human misery, had none been born in so pitiable a state.

Then again, how have deformities and diseases prompted to discoveries and inventions! How ignorant, without them, should we have remained of the power of medicines, of the aids which may be furnished to the infirm and deficient! How unsuspected would have been those marvellous ways of getting at the shut-up mind, and conveying into it intelligence, which now, in a great measure, supply the place of hearing or sight, the dumb person being spoken with, and the blind reading the word of the Lord. These ways are something more than the devices of human ingenuity. Human ingenuity is but a power, given of God, to be called out by peculiar contingencies: and if God make the contingencies on purpose to call out the power, what is He doing but manifesting His works? Truly the child is born blind, "that the works of God should be made manifest in him," if the blindness afford opportunity

for the development of powers, capacities, or remedies, which God has concealed, whether in the constitution of things, or the inventiveness of genius, but which would have remained undiscovered, had eyesight been never wanting, or never impaired. Then again, how, by sending many into the world in a comparatively helpless condition, has God provided for a constant and wholesome demand on our charities and sensibilities. Talk not of sparing the blind, the dumb, the lame, as though practical Christianity had no need of these sufferers. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." There is many a quiet and sequestered parish, on which the deformities or deficiencies of a few act with a surprising moral power: benevolence is excited, sympathies are engaged, and kindly efforts are made for the relief of the afflicted; and it may justly be said that the child of one poor peasant is born blind, and of another dumb, "that the works of God may be made manifest," if the wealthier are drawn to the humble cottage, showing forth that kindness which is a fruit of that faith which is the work of God Himself in the human heart. Throw together the several considerations thus hastily advanced, and to which it would be easy to add, and is there not reason enough for our supposing it possible, in regard of every deformed person, every blind, every deaf, every dumb, that, so far from his having been made such for his own sin, or the sin of his parents, he has been made such, "that the works of God might be manifest in him?"

We cannot but dwell with the greatest interest on these words of our text. They seem like a shield of protection thrown gracefully by our blessed Redeemer round the most helpless of our race. They give a kind of dignity

to deformity, not only securing it from contempt, but requiring for it respect; denouncing not merely those who would treat it with ridicule or neglect, but those also who fail to discern in it a means for advancing God's vast, if inscrutable purposes. I would have the words graven as a motto over every asylum for the blind, the deaf, the crippled, the dumb. They would teach the supporters of such noble institutions, that they were doing something more than mitigating a certain species of human misery; that they had under their care one of those mighty hosts by which God wages war with principalities and powers. Oh, who can fail to look hereafter with something more than pity on the deformed, on those wanting in the common organs or faculties; to look on them with a measure of the very feelings excited by the spectacle of instruments employed to the highest ends; if he remember that, of every blind, and of every dumb, and of every maimed person there may be good ground for saying, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

END OF VOL. I.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

NEW BOOKS

IN COURSE OF PUBLICATION BY

MESSRS. RIVINGTON

WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON

HIGH STREET, OXFORD; TRINITY STREET, CAMBRIDGE

June, 1872

THE BOOK OF CHURCH LAW. *Being an Exposition of the Legal Rights and Duties of the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England. By the* Rev. JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., F.S.A. *Revised by* WALTER F. G. PHILLIMORE, B.C.L., *Barrister-at-Law, and Chancellor of the Diocese of Lincoln.*

Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

HENRI PERREYVE. *By* A. GRATRY, *Prêtre de l'Oratoire, Professeur de Morale Evangélique à la Sorbonne, et Membre de l'Académie Française. Translated, by special permission, by the Author of "A Dominican Artist," "Life of S. Francis de Sales," &c., &c.*

With Portrait. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

NOTITIA EUCHARISTICA. *A Commentary, Explanatory, Doctrinal, and Historical, on the Order of the Administration of the Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, according to the use of the Church of England. By* W. E. SCUDAMORE, M.A., *Rector of Ditchingham, and formerly Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.*

8vo. 28*s.*

Messrs. Rivington's

A SELECTION FROM THE SPIRITUAL LETTERS OF S. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA. *Translated by the Author of "Life of S. Francis de Sales," "A Dominican Artist," &c., &c.*

Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

FIFTEEN SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, BETWEEN A.D. 1826 AND 1843. *By* JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D., *some time Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford.*

Printed uniformly with the "Parochial and Plain Sermons."

New Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

THE BOOK OF LESSONS. *Containing the Proper Psalms and Lessons for Sundays and Holy Days, together with the Daily Lessons from the Calendar, printed in full, according to the New Table of Lessons.*

Crown 8vo. 9*s.*

VITA ET DOCTRINA JESU CHRISTI; OR, MEDITATIONS ON THE LIFE OF OUR LORD. *By* N. AVANCINI. *In the Original Latin. Adapted to the use of the Church of England by a* CLERGYMAN.

Imperial 32mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

THE ANNOTATED BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. *Being an Historical, Ritual, and Theological Commentary on the Devotional System of the Church of England. Edited by* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., F.S.A.

Sixth Edition, Revised. Imperial 8vo. 36*s.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

THE ARGUMENT DELIVERED BEFORE THE JUDICIAL COMMITTEE OF THE PRIVY COUNCIL. *By* ARCHIBALD JOHN STEPHENS, LL.D., *one of Her Majesty's Counsel in the case of* THOMAS BYARD SHEPPARD *against* WILLIAM EARLY BENNETT, *Clerk. With an Appendix containing their Lordships' Judgment.*

8vo. [*Just Ready.*

LATIN PROSE EXERCISES. *Being easy graduated English Sentences for Translation into Latin, with Rules, Explanations, a Vocabulary, and Index. Intended for the Use of Beginners and Junior Forms of Schools. By* R. PROWDE SMITH, B.A., *Assistant Master at the Grammar School, Henley-on-Thames.*

Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

LECTURES ON THE RE-UNION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. *By* JOHN J. IGN. VON DÖLLINGER. Revised by the Author after delivery. Authorised Translation.

Crown 8vo. [*In the Press.*

THE LAST DAYS OF PÈRE GRATRY. *By* PÈRE ADOLPHE PERRAUD, *of the Oratory, and Professor of La Sorbonne. Translated by special permission.*

Crown 8vo. [*Just Ready.*

THE KNIGHT OF INTERCESSION, AND OTHER POEMS. *By the* REV. S. J. STONE, M.A., *Pembroke College, Oxford, Author of "The Thanksgiving Hymn on the Recovery of the Prince of Wales."*

Small 8vo. [*In the Press.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

EIGHT LECTURES ON THE MIRACLES.

Being the Bampton Lectures for 1865. *By* J. B. MOZLEY, D.D., *Regius Professor of Divinity, and Canon of Christ Church, Oxford.*

Third Edition, Revised. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

WORDS TO TAKE WITH US. *A Manual of Daily and Occasional Prayers, for Private and Common Use. With plain Instructions and Counsels on Prayer. By* W. E. SCUDAMORE, M.A., *Rector of Ditchingham, and formerly Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.*

New Edition, Revised. Small 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

A SHADOW OF DANTE. *Being an Essay towards studying Himself, his World, and his Pilgrimage. By* MARIA FRANCESCA ROSSETTI.

With Illustrations. Crown 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

A THEORY OF HARMONY. *Founded on the Tempered Scale. With Questions and Exercises for the use of Students. By* JOHN STAINER, MUS. DOC., M.A., *Magd. Coll., Oxon, Organist to St. Paul's Cathedral.*

8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

SELECTIONS FROM LUCIAN. *With English Notes. By* EVELYN ABBOTT, *Assistant Master in Clifton College.*

Small 8vo. [*In the Press.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH: ITS DIVINE IDEAL, MINISTRY, AND INSTITUTIONS. *A Short Treatise. With a Catechism on each Chapter, forming a Course of Methodical Instruction on the subject. By* EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D., *Dean of Norwich.*

Crown 8vo. [*Nearly Ready.*

A HANDY BOOK ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL DILAPIDATIONS ACT, 1871. *With Remarks on the Qualification and Practice of Diocesan Surveyors. By* EDWARD G. BRUTON, *Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and Diocesan Surveyor, Oxford.*

Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

SERMONS ON CERTAIN OF THE LESS PROMINENT FACTS AND REFERENCES IN SACRED STORY. *By* HENRY MELVILL, B.D., *late Canon of St. Paul's, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen.*

New Edition. Two vols. Crown 8vo. 5*s.* each.

SOME ELEMENTS OF RELIGION. *Lent Lectures. By* HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L., *Canon of St. Paul's, and Ireland Professor of Exegesis in the University of Oxford.*

Crown 8vo. [*In the Press.*

AIDS TO PRAYER; OR, THOUGHTS ON THE PRACTICE OF DEVOTION. *With Forms of Prayer for Private Use. By* DANIEL MOORE, M.A., *Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, and Vicar of Holy Trinity, Paddington, Author of "Sermons on Special Occasions."*

Second Edition. Square 32mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

SCENES FROM GREEK PLAYS. *Rugby Edition. Abridged and adapted for the use of Schools, by* ARTHUR SIDGWICK, M.A., *Assistant Master at Rugby School, and formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.*

ARISTOPHANES. *The Clouds. The Frogs. The Knights. Plutus.*

EURIPIDES. *Iphigenia in Tauris. The Cyclops.*

Small 8vo. 1*s.* 6*d.* each, or 1*s.* in paper cover.

CHURCH ORGANS: *Their Position and Construction. With an Appendix containing some Account of the Mediæval Organ Case still existing at Old Radnor, South Wales. By* FREDERICK HEATHCOTE SUTTON, M.A., *Vicar of Theddingworth.*

With Illustrations. Imperial folio. 6*s.* 6*d.*

THE PATH OF HOLINESS: *A First Book of Prayers, with the Service of the Holy Communion, for the Young. Compiled by a Priest. Edited by the Rev.* T. T. CARTER, M.A., *Rector of Clewer, Berks.*

With Illustrations. Crown 16mo, 1*s.* 6*d.*, or limp cloth, 1*s.*

PROGRESSIVE EXERCISES IN LATIN ELEGIAC VERSE. *By* C. G. GEPP, B.A., *late Junior Student of Christ Church, Oxford, and Assistant Master at Tonbridge School.*

Second Edition, Revised. Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

THE ATHANASIAN ORIGIN OF THE ATHANASIAN CREED. *By* J. S. BREWER, M.A., *Preacher at the Rolls, and Honorary Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford.*

Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

THE THIRTY-NINE ARTICLES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EXPLAINED IN A SERIES OF LECTURES. *By the* REV. R. W. JELF, D.D., *late Canon of Christ Church, Oxford, and sometime Principal of King's College, London. Edited by the* REV. J. R. KING, M.A., *Vicar of St. Peter's in the East, Oxford, and formerly Fellow and Tutor of Merton College.*

8vo. [*In the Press.*

S. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA. *By the Author of "A Dominican Artist," "Life of Madame Louise de France," &c., &c.*

Crown 8vo. 9*s.*

HISTORICAL NARRATIVES. *From the Russian. By* H. C. ROMANOFF, *Author of "Sketches of the Rites and Customs of the Greco-Russian Church," &c.*

Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

THE WAY OF LIFE. *A Book of Prayers and Instruction for the Young at School. Compiled by a Priest. Edited by the* REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A., *Rector of Clewer, Berks.*

Imperial 32mo. 1*s.* 6*d.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

THOUGHTS ON PERSONAL RELIGION.

Being a Treatise on the Christian Life in its Two Chief Elements, Devotion and Practice. By EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D., *Dean of Norwich.*

New Presentation Edition, elegantly printed on Toned Paper.
Two vols. Small 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

An Edition in one vol., 6*s.* 6*d.*; also, a CHEAP EDITION, 3*s.* 6*d.*

A CHURCH HISTORY OF THE FIRST SEVEN CENTURIES, TO THE CLOSE OF THE SIXTH GENERAL COUNCIL.

By MILO MAHAN, D.D., *sometime S. Mark's-in-the-Bowery Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the General Theological Seminary, New York.*

8vo. 15*s.*

ENGLISH NURSERY RHYMES. TRANSLATED INTO FRENCH.

By JOHN ROBERTS, M.A., *Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge.*

Square 16mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

THE SPIRIT OF S. FRANCIS DE SALES,

Bishop and Prince of Geneva. Translated from the French by the Author of "The Life of S. Francis de Sales," "A Dominican Artist," &c., &c.

Crown 8vo. [*In the Press.*

OUR MOTHER CHURCH. *Being Simple Talk on High Topics.*

By ANNE MERCIER.

Crown 8vo. [*Just Ready.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

DICTIONARY OF DOCTRINAL AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY. *By Various Writers. Edited by the* REV. JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., F.S.A., *Editor of "The Annotated Book of Common Prayer."*

Imperial 8vo. 42*s.*

THE PSALMS. *Translated from the Hebrew. With Notes, chiefly Exegetical. By* WILLIAM KAY, D.D., *Rector of Great Leighs; late Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta.*

8vo. 12*s.* 6*d.*

SERMONS. *By* HENRY MELVILL, B.D., *late Canon of St. Paul's, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen.*

New Edition. Two vols. Crown 8vo. 5*s.* each.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF. *By* S. BARING-GOULD, M.A., *Author of "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages."*

Vol. I. Monotheism and Polytheism. Second Edition. 8vo. 15*s.*
Vol. II. Christianity. 8vo. 15*s.*

PARISH MUSINGS; OR, DEVOTIONAL POEMS. *By* JOHN S. B. MONSELL, LL.D., *Rural Dean, and Rector of St. Nicholas, Guildford.*

Fine Edition. Small 8vo. 5*s.*
Cheap Edition, 18mo, limp cloth, 1*s.* 6*d.*; or in cover, 1*s.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

SERMONS ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS. *By* DANIEL MOORE, M.A., *Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, and Vicar of Holy Trinity, Paddington; Author of "Aids to Prayer," &c.*

Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS FOR THE HOLY COMMUNION. *With a Preface by* C. J. ELLICOTT, D.D., *Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.*

With Rubrics in red. Royal 32mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

MATERIALS AND MODELS FOR GREEK AND LATIN PROSE COMPOSITION. *Selected and arranged by* J. Y. SARGENT, M.A., *Tutor, late Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford; and* T. F. DALLIN, M.A., *Fellow and Tutor of Queen's College, Oxford.*

Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE STAR OF CHILDHOOD. *A First Book of Prayers and Instruction for Children. Compiled by a Priest. Edited by the* REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A., *Rector of Clewer, Berks.*

With Illustrations, reduced from Engravings by FRA ANGELICO. Royal 16mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

SELF-RENUNCIATION. *From the French. With Introduction by the* REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A., *Rector of Clewer, Berks.*

Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF THE SOUL.

From the French. By the Author of "A Dominican Artist," "Life of Madame Louise de France," &c., &c.

Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

ANCIENT HYMNS. *From the Roman Breviary.*

For Domestic Use every Morning and Evening of the Week, and on the Holy Days of the Church. To which are added, Original Hymns, principally of Commemoration and Thanksgiving for Christ's Holy Ordinances. By RICHARD MANT, D.D., *sometime Lord Bishop of Down and Connor.*

New Edition. Small 8vo. 5*s.*

THE TWO BROTHERS, *and other Poems.*

By EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH, M.A., *Vicar of Christ Church, Hampstead, and Chaplain to the Bishop of Ripon, Author of "Yesterday, To-day, and for Ever."*

Second Edition. Small 8vo. 6*s.*

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S LITURGY.

Translated by H. C. ROMANOFF, *Author of "Sketches of the Rites and Customs of the Greco-Russian Church."*

With Illustrations. Square crown 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

THE LIFE OF JUSTIFICATION. *A Series*

of Lectures delivered in Substance at All Saints', Margaret Street, in Lent, 1870. *By the* REV. GEORGE BODY, B.A., *Rector of Kirkby Misperton.*

Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

THE "DAMNATORY CLAUSES" OF THE ATHANASIAN CREED RATIONALLY EXPLAINED, IN A LETTER TO THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE. *By the* Rev. MALCOLM MACCOLL, M.A., *Rector of St. George, Botolph Lane.*

Crown 8vo. [*Nearly Ready.*

THE SAYINGS OF THE GREAT FORTY DAYS, *between the Resurrection and Ascension, regarded as the Outlines of the Kingdom of God. In Five Discourses. With an Examination of Dr. Newman's Theory of Development. By* GEORGE MOBERLY, D.C.L., *Bishop of Salisbury.*

Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

A PLAIN ACCOUNT OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE. *From the Earliest Times of its Translation to the Present Day. By* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., *Vicar of Kennington, Oxford; Editor of "The Annotated Book of Common Prayer," &c.*

Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

THE POPE AND THE COUNCIL. *By* JANUS. *Authorised Translation from the German.*

Third Edition, Revised. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

LETTERS FROM ROME ON THE COUNCIL. *By* QUIRINUS. *Reprinted from the* "ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG." *Authorised Translation.*

Crown 8vo. 12*s.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

DIRECTORIUM PASTORALE. *The Principles and Practice of Pastoral Work in the Church of England. By the* REV. JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., F.S.A., *Editor of "The Annotated Book of Common Prayer," &c., &c.*

Third Edition, Revised. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

THE FIRST BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER OF EDWARD VI. AND THE ORDINAL OF 1549. *Together with the Order of the Communion,* 1548. *Reprinted entire, and Edited by the* REV. HENRY BASKERVILLE WALTON, M.A., *late Fellow and Tutor of Merton College; with Introduction by the* REV. PETER GOLDSMITH MEDD, M.A., *Senior Fellow and Tutor of University College, Oxford.*

Small 8vo. 6*s.*

THE PURSUIT OF HOLINESS. *A Sequel to "Thoughts on Personal Religion," intended to carry the Reader somewhat farther onward in the Spiritual Life. By* EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D., *Dean of Norwich.*

Fourth Edition. Small 8vo. 5*s.*

APOSTOLICAL SUCCESSION IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. *By the* REV. ARTHUR W. HADDAN, B.D., *Rector of Barton-on-the-Heath, and late Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford.*

8vo. 12*s.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE.

Messrs. Rivington's

THE PRIEST TO THE ALTAR; *or, Aids to the Devout Celebration of Holy Communion; chiefly after the Ancient Use of Sarum.*

Second Edition. Enlarged, Revised, and Re-arranged with the Secretæ, Post-communion, &c., appended to the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, throughout the Year.

8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

PAROCHIAL AND PLAIN SERMONS. *By* JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D., *formerly Vicar of St. Mary's, Oxford. Edited by the* REV. W. J. COPELAND, *Rector of Farnham, Essex.*

From the Text of the last Editions published by MESSRS. RIVINGTON.

New Edition. Eight vols. Crown 8vo. 5*s.* each.

SERMONS BEARING ON SUBJECTS OF THE DAY. *By* JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, B.D. *Edited by the* REV. W. J. COPELAND, *Rector of Farnham, Essex.*

With Index of Dates of all the Sermons.

New Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

BRIGHSTONE SERMONS. *By* GEORGE MOBERLY, D.C.L., *Bishop of Salisbury.*

Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. *A Series of Sermons. By the* REV. ISAAC WILLIAMS, B.D., *late Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford.*

New Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

FEMALE CHARACTERS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. *A Series of Sermons. By the* REV. ISAAC WILLIAMS, B.D., *late Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford.*

New Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

THE DIVINITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. *Being the Bampton Lectures for* 1866. *By* HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L., *Canon of St. Paul's, and Ireland Professor of Exegesis in the University of Oxford.*

Fifth Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

SERMONS PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD. *By* HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L., *Canon of St. Paul's, and Ireland Professor of Exegesis in the University of Oxford.*

Fourth Edition. Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

A MANUAL FOR THE SICK. *With other Devotions. By* LAUNCELOT ANDREWES, D.D., *sometime Lord Bishop of Winchester. Edited, with a Preface, by* HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L., *Canon of St. Paul's.*

With Portrait. Second Edition. Large type. 24mo. 2*s.* 6*d.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

WALTER KERR HAMILTON, BISHOP OF SALISBURY. *A Sketch. By* HENRY PARRY LIDDON, D.D., D.C.L., *Canon of St. Paul's.*

Second Edition. 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.*
Or, bound with the Sermon "Life in Death," 3*s.* 6*d.*

THE LIFE OF MADAME LOUISE DE FRANCE, *Daughter of Louis XV., known also as the Mother Thérèse de S. Augustin. By the Author of "A Dominican Artist," &c.*

Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE USE OF CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS, AND OF THE PAROCHIAL CLERGY; *with Acts of Parliament relating to the same, and Forms proposed to be used. By* CHRISTOPHER HODGSON, M.A., *Secretary to the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty.*

Ninth Edition, Revised and Enlarged. 8vo. 16*s.*

THE TREASURY OF DEVOTION. *A Manual of Prayers for General and Daily Use. Compiled by a Priest. Edited by the* REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A., *Rector of Clewer, Berks.*

Fourth Edition. 16mo, 2*s.* 6*d.*; Limp cloth, 2*s.*
Bound with the Book of Common Prayer, 3*s.* 6*d.*

A DOMINICAN ARTIST. *A Sketch of the Life of the Rev. Père Besson, of the Order of St. Dominic. By the Author of "The Life of Madame Louise de France," &c.*

Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

THE GUIDE TO HEAVEN. *A Book of Prayers for every Want. (For the Working Classes.) Compiled by a Priest. Edited by the* REV. T. T. CARTER, M.A., *Rector of Clewer, Berks.*

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 1*s.* 6*d.*; Limp cloth, 1*s.*

THE REFORMATION OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND. *Its History, Principles, and Results.* A.D. 1514–1547. *By* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., *Vicar of Kennington, Oxford, Editor of "The Annotated Book of Common Prayer," Author of "Directorium Pastorale," &c., &c.*

Second Edition. 8vo. 16*s.*

THE VIRGIN'S LAMP. *Prayers and Devout Exercises for English Sisters. Chiefly composed and selected by the late* REV. J. M. NEALE, D.D., *Founder of St. Margaret's, East Grinsted.*

Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

CATECHETICAL NOTES AND CLASS QUESTIONS, LITERAL AND MYSTICAL. *Chiefly on the Earlier Books of Holy Scripture. By the late* REV. J. M. NEALE, D.D., *Warden of Sackville College, East Grinsted.*

Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

SERMONS FOR CHILDREN. *Being Thirty-three Short Readings, addressed to the Children of St. Margaret's Home, East Grinsted. By the late* REV. J. M. NEALE, D.D., *Warden of Sackville College, East Grinsted.*

Second Edition. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

Messrs. Rivington's

A HISTORY OF THE HOLY EASTERN CHURCH. *The Patriarchate of Antioch, to the Middle of the Fifth Century. By the* REV. JOHN MASON NEALE, D.D., *late Warden of Sackville College, East Grinsted. Followed by a History of the Patriarchs of Antioch, translated from the Greek of Constantius I., Patriarch of Constantinople. Edited, with an Introduction, by* GEORGE WILLIAMS, B.D., *Vicar of Ringwood, late Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.*

8vo. [*In the Press.*

FABLES RESPECTING THE POPES OF THE MIDDLE AGES. *A Contribution to Ecclesiastical History. By* JOHN J. IGN. VON DÖLLINGER. *Translated, with Introduction and Appendices, by* ALFRED PLUMMER, M.A., *Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Oxford.*

8vo. 14*s.*

PHYSICAL FACTS AND SCRIPTURAL RECORD; OR, EIGHTEEN PROPOSITIONS FOR GEOLOGISTS. *By* W. B. GALLOWAY, M.A., *Vicar of St. Mark's, Regent's Park, and Chaplain to the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Hawarden.*

8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

DEAN ALFORD'S GREEK TESTAMENT. *With English Notes, intended for the Upper Forms of Schools, and for Pass-men at the Universities. Abridged by* BRADLEY H. ALFORD, M.A., *late Scholar of Trinity College, Cambridge.*

Crown 8vo. 10*s.* 6*d.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

HONORÉ DE BALZAC. *Edited, with English Notes and Introductory Notice, by* HENRI VAN LAUN, *formerly French Master at Cheltenham College, and now Master of the French Language and Literature at the Edinburgh Academy.*

(Being the First Volume of "Selections from Modern French Authors.")

Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

H. A. TAINE. *Edited, with English Notes and Introductory Notice, by* HENRI VAN LAUN.

(Being the Second Volume of "Selections from Modern French Authors.")

Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

ARITHMETIC, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL. *By* W. H. GIRDLESTONE, M.A., *of Christ's College, Cambridge, Principal of the Theological College, Gloucester.*

New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.* 6*d.*

Also an Edition for Schools. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

DICTIONARY OF SECTS, HERESIES, AND SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT. *By Various Writers. Edited by the* REV. JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., F.S.A., *Editor of the "Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology."*

(Forming the Second Portion of the "Summary of Theology and Ecclesiastical History," which Messrs. Rivington have in course of preparation as a "Thesaurus Theologicus" for the Clergy and Laity of the Church of England.)

Imperial 8vo. [*In the Press.*

Messrs. Rivington's

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS. *The Epistles of S. Clement, S. Ignatius, S. Barnabas, S. Polycarp, together with the Martyrdom of S. Ignatius and S. Polycarp. Translated into English, with an Introductory Notice, by* CHARLES H. HOOLE, M.A., *Senior Student of Christ Church, Oxford.*

Small 8vo. 5*s.* 6*d.*

HELP AND COMFORT FOR THE SICK POOR. *By the Author of "Sickness; its Trials and Blessings."*

New Edition. Small 8vo. 1*s.*

HERODOTI HISTORIA. *Edited by* H. G. WOODS, M.A., *Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Oxford.*

Crown 8vo.

Forming a New Part of the "Catena Classicorum."

[*In the Press.*

SKETCHES OF THE RITES AND CUSTOMS OF THE GRECO-RUSSIAN CHURCH. *By* H. C. ROMANOFF. *With an Introductory Notice by the Author of "The Heir of Redclyffe."*

Second Edition. Crown 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

HOUSEHOLD THEOLOGY. *A Handbook of Religious Information respecting the Holy Bible, the Prayer Book, the Church, the Ministry, Divine Worship, the Creeds, &c., &c. By* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A.

New Edition. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

CURIOUS MYTHS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

By S. BARING-GOULD, M.A., *Author of "Post-Mediæval Preachers," &c.*

With Illustrations. New Edition. Crown 8vo. 6*s.*

THE PRAYER BOOK INTERLEAVED.

With Historical Illustrations and Explanatory Notes, arranged parallel to the Text. By the REV. W. M. CAMPION, D.D., *Fellow and Tutor of Queen's College, and Rector of St. Botolph's, and the* REV. W. J. BEAMONT, M.A., *late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. With a Preface by the* LORD BISHOP OF ELY.

Sixth Edition. Small 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

SICKNESS; ITS TRIALS AND BLESSINGS.

New Edition. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*
Also a Cheap Edition, 1*s.* 6*d.*; or in paper cover, 1*s.*

HYMNS AND POEMS FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING.

In connection with the Service for the Visitation of the Sick. Selected from Various Authors. Edited by T. V. FOSBERY, M.A., *Vicar of St. Giles's, Reading.*

New Edition. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

By HENRY FRANCIS LYTE, M.A.

New Edition. Small 8vo. 5*s.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

THE HAPPINESS OF THE BLESSED.

Considered as to the Particulars of their State; their Recognition of each other in that State; and its Differences of Degrees. To which are added, Musings on the Church and her Services. By RICHARD MANT, D.D., *sometime Lord Bishop of Down and Connor.*

New Edition. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

CATECHESIS; OR, CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION PREPARATORY TO CONFIRMATION AND FIRST COMMUNION.

By CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.C.L., *Bishop of St. Andrew's.*

New Edition. Small 8vo. 2*s.*

WARNINGS OF THE HOLY WEEK, &c.

Being a Course of Parochial Lectures for the Week before Easter and the Easter Festivals. By the REV. W. ADAMS, M.A., *late Vicar of St. Peter's-in-the-East, Oxford, and Fellow of Merton College.*

Seventh Edition. Small 8vo. 4*s.* 6*d.*

CONSOLATIO; OR, COMFORT FOR THE AFFLICTED.

Edited by the REV. C. E. KENNAWAY. *With a Preface by* SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, D.D., *Lord Bishop of Winchester.*

New Edition. Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

RECOLLECTIONS OF OBER-AMMERGAU IN 1871.

By HENRY NUTCOMBE OXENHAM, M.A., *late Scholar of Balliol College, Oxford.*

Crown 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

FAMILY PRAYERS. *Compiled from Various Sources (chiefly from Bishop Hamilton's Manual), and arranged on the Liturgical Principle. By* EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D., *Dean of Norwich.*

New Edition. Large type. Crown 8vo, 3*s.* 6*d.*
Cheap Edition. 16mo. 1*s.*

THE ANNUAL REGISTER. *A Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad, for the Year* 1871.

8vo. 18*s.*

The Volumes of the New Series, 1863 to 1870, may be had, 18*s.* each.

THE HOME LIFE OF JESUS OF NAZARETH, &c. *By the* REV. AUGUSTUS GURNEY, M.A., *Vicar of Wribbenhall, Kidderminster, in the Diocese of Worcester.*

Crown 8vo. 5*s.*

A MEMORIAL VOLUME OF SERMONS. *By the late* REV. JOHN HENRY HOLFORD, M.A. *With a Short Biographical Preface. By the* REV. E. H. BICKERSTETH, M.A.

Small 8vo. 5*s.*

THE GOSPEL OF THE CHILDHOOD. *A Practical and Devotional Commentary on the Single Incident of our Blessed* LORD'S *Childhood (St. Luke* ii. 41, *to the end); designed as a Help to Meditation on the Holy Scriptures, for Children and Young Persons. By* EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D., *Dean of Norwich.*

Square 16mo. [*In the Press.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER.

A Poem in Twelve Books. By EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH, M.A., *Vicar of Christ Church, Hampstead, and Chaplain to the Bishop of Ripon.*

Seventh Edition. Small 8vo. 6*s.*

A COMPANION TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

Being a Plain Commentary on Scripture History, down to the Birth of our Lord.

Small 8vo. 3*s.* 6*d.*

SACRED ALLEGORIES. *The Shadow of the Cross—The Distant Hills—The Old Man's Home—The King's Messengers. By the* REV. W. ADAMS, M.A., *late Fellow of Merton College, Oxford.*

With Engravings from Original Designs by Charles W. Cope, R.A., John C. Horsley, A.R.A., Samuel Palmer, Birket Foster, and George Hicks.

The Four Allegories, separately. Crown 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* each.

A GLOSSARY OF ECCLESIASTICAL TERMS.

Containing Brief Explanations of Words used in Theology, Liturgiology, Chronology, Law, Architecture, Antiquities, Symbolism, Greek Hierology and Mediæval Latin; together with some account of Titles of our Lord, Emblems of Saints, Hymns, Orders, Heresies, Ornaments, Offices, Vestments and Ceremonial, and Miscellaneous Subjects. By Various Writers. Edited by the REV. ORBY SHIPLEY, M.A.

Crown 8vo. 18*s.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

STONES OF THE TEMPLE; OR, LESSONS

FROM THE FABRIC AND FURNITURE OF THE CHURCH. *By* WALTER FIELD, M.A., F.S.A., *Vicar of Godmersham.*

With numerous Illustrations. Crown 8vo. *7s. 6d.*

LIBER PRECUM PUBLICARUM ECCLESIÆ

ANGLICANÆ. *A* GULIELMO BRIGHT, A.M., *et* PETRO GOLDSMITH MEDD, A.M., *Presbyteris, Collegii Universitatis in Acad. Oxon. Sociis, Latine redditus.*

New Edition, with all the Rubrics in red. Small 8vo. *6s.*

BIBLE READINGS FOR FAMILY PRAYER.

By the REV. W. H. RIDLEY, M.A., *Rector of Hambleden.*

Crown 8vo.

Old Testament—Genesis and Exodus. *2s.*

New Testament, *3s. 6d.* { St. Matthew and St. Mark. *2s.* / St. Luke and St. John. *2s.*

SELECT PLAYS OF SHAKSPERE. *Rugby Edition.*

"As You Like It." *Edited by* CHAS. E. MOBERLY, M.A., *Assistant Master in Rugby School.*

Small 8vo. *2s.*; or in paper cover, *1s. 6d.*

*** *Other Plays are in Preparation.*

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

New Pamphlets.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE: *A Letter to His Grace the* ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY. *From the Right Hon.* SIR ROBERT PHILLIMORE, *Judge of the Arches Court.*

8vo. 6*d.*

ENGLISH CHURCH DEFENCE TRACTS.

No. 1. ROMAN MISQUOTATIONS.

No. 2. ARE CLERGYMEN OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH RIGHTLY ORDAINED?

No. 3. PAPAL INFALLIBILITY.

No. 4. MORE ABOUT "ROMAN MISQUOTATIONS": IN REPLY TO A PAMPHLET ENTITLED "ANGLICAN MISREPRESENTATIONS."

8vo. 3*d.* each.

REMARKS ON THE MEMORIAL AND PETITION TO CONVOCATION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE ENGLISH CHURCH UNION, *headed respectively "Proposed Legislation on the Prayer-Book" (Jan.* 30, 1872), *and "Proposed Rubric against Non-Communicating Attendance during the Holy Communion" (April* 15, 1872.) *By* W. E. SCUDAMORE, *Rector of Ditchingham, Norfolk.*

8vo. 1*s.*

THE PROPOSED CONTROL OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY THE UNIVERSITIES. *By* EDWARD E. BOWEN, M.A., *Master of the Modern Side, Harrow School.*

8vo. 1*s.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

New Pamphlets
ON THE ATHANASIAN CREED.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF BISHOPS ON THE REVISION OF THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION OF THE ATHANASIAN CREED, *with an Introduction and Notes. By* CHARLES JOHN, *Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol.* 8vo. 1*s.*

ON THE ATHANASIAN CREED. *A Speech by the* BISHOP OF LINCOLN *in the Upper House of Convocation, Feb.* 8, 1872.
Small 8vo. 1*d.*

THE TOWERS OF ZION. A *Sermon on the Athanasian Creed, preached in St. Michael and All Angels' Church, Weyhill, on Trinity Sunday,* 1871. *By* W. H. SIMCOX, M.A., *Rector of Weyhill, late Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford.*
8vo. 6*d.*

SHOW THE LIGHT AND BLOW THE TRUMPET; *or, Gideon's Good Advice for Dispersing the Midianites applied to the Defence of the Athanasian Creed. A Sermon at St. Cyprian's, on Refreshment Sunday, March* 10, 1872, *by the* Rev. CHARLES GUTCH, B.D. 8vo. 1*s.*

THE ATHANASIAN CREED NEITHER UNCHARITABLE NOR TOO ABSTRUSE FOR GENERAL USE. *A Sermon Preached in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon, on Trinity Sunday,* 1872. *By the* Rev. RICHARD SEYMOUR, *Rector of Kinwarton, Honorary Canon of Worcester Cathedral, and Proctor for the Clergy of the Diocese.*
Crown 8vo. 4*d.*

THE ATHANASIAN CREED. *With special reference to the so-called Damnatory Clauses and the Proposed Revision of the Translation. A Paper read at a Ruridecanal Chapter. With an Appendix containing an Examination of some Points advanced by Professor Swainson respecting the Creed. By* G. D. W. OMMANNEY, M.A., *Curate of Whitchurch, Somerset.*
8vo. 1*s.*

IS IT GOD'S TRUTH? IS IT WIDELY RECEIVED AND BELIEVED BY GOD'S CHURCH? *Reasons for neither mutilating nor muffling* THE ATHANASIAN CREED, *but retaining it intact in the Services of the Church. By* EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D., *Dean of Norwich.*
8vo. 1*s.*

THE ADMONITORY CLAUSES IN THE CHURCH'S HOMILETICAL CREED. *A Letter to the Rev. C. J. Vaughan,* D.D., *Master of the Temple. By* PHILIP FREEMAN, M.A., *Archdeacon of Exeter.*
8vo. 6*d.*

WHY A NOTE TO THE ATHANASIAN CREED? *A Letter suggested by that on the Admonitory Clauses of the Church's Homiletical Creed. Addressed, by permission, to the Ven. the Archdeacon of Exeter. By* JOHN PUCKLE, M.A., *Vicar of St. Mary's, Dover, Rural Dean, Proctor in Convocation for the Diocese of Canterbury.*
8vo. 1*s.*

Messrs. Rivington's

Keys to Christian Knowledge.

Small 8vo. 2*s.* 6*d.* each.

A KEY TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. *By* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A., *Editor of "The Annotated Book of Common Prayer."*

A KEY TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND USE OF THE HOLY BIBLE. *By* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A.

A KEY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHURCH HISTORY (ANCIENT). *Edited by* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A.

A KEY TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHURCH HISTORY (MODERN). *Edited by* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A.

A KEY TO CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE. (*Founded on the Church Catechism.*) *By* JOHN HENRY BLUNT, M.A.

A KEY TO THE NARRATIVE OF THE FOUR GOSPELS. *By* JOHN PILKINGTON NORRIS, M.A., *Canon of Bristol, formerly one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.*

A KEY TO THE NARRATIVE OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. *By* JOHN PILKINGTON NORRIS, M.A.

Other Keys are in Preparation.

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

Rivington's Mathematical Series.

12mo.

By J. HAMBLIN SMITH, M.A.,

of Gonville and Caius College, and late Lecturer at St. Peter's College, Cambridge.

ALGEBRA. Part I. 2*s.* 6*d.* With Answers, 3*s.*

EXERCISES ON ALGEBRA, *Part I.* 2*s.* 6*d.* Copies may be had without the Answers.

ELEMENTARY TRIGONOMETRY, 4*s.* 6*d.*

ELEMENTARY HYDROSTATICS. 3*s.*

ELEMENTS OF GEOMETRY. *Containing the First Four Books of Euclid, with Exercises and Notes.* 3*s.*

Books 1 *and* 2, *Books* 3 *and* 4 } 2*s. each; or limp cloth,* 1*s.* 6*d.*

The Concluding Part Nearly Ready.

ELEMENTARY STATICS. 3*s.*

By E. J. GROSS, M.A.,

Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

ALGEBRA. Part II. [*In preparation.*

By G. RICHARDSON, M.A.,

Assistant Master at Winchester College, and late Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge.

GEOMETRICAL CONIC SECTIONS. [*In the Press.*

By H. E. OAKELEY, M.A.,

Late Fellow and Senior Mathematical Lecturer of Jesus College, Cambridge, H.M. Inspector of Schools.

ANALYTICAL GEOMETRY OF TWO DIMENSIONS. [*In preparation.*

Other Works are in Preparation.

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Messrs. Rivington's

CATENA CLASSICORUM. *A Series of Classical Authors. Edited by Members of both Universities, under the Direction of the* REV. ARTHUR HOLMES, M.A., *Senior Fellow and Lecturer of Clare College, Cambridge, and Preacher at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall; and the* REV. CHARLES BIGG, M.A., *late Senior Student and Tutor of Christ Church, Oxford, Principal of Brighton College.*

SOPHOCLIS TRAGOEDIAE. *Edited by* R. C. JEBB, M.A., *Fellow and Assistant Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Public Orator of the University.*
THE ELECTRA. 3*s.* 6*d.*
THE AJAX. 3*s.* 6*d.*

JUVENALIS SATIRAE. *Edited by* G. A. SIMCOX, M.A., *Fellow and Classical Lecturer of Queen's College, Oxford.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

THUCYDIDIS HISTORIA. *Edited by* CHAS. BIGG, M.A., *late Senior Student and Tutor of Christ Church, Oxford; Principal of Brighton College.*
Books I. and II. with Introductions. 6*s.*

DEMOSTHENIS ORATIONES PUBLICAE. *Edited by* G. H. HESLOP, M.A., *late Fellow and Assistant Tutor of Queen's Col., Oxford; Head Master of St. Bees.*
THE OLYNTHIACS. 2*s.* 6*d.*
THE PHILIPPICS. 3*s.*
DE FALSA LEGATIONE. 6*s.*

ARISTOPHANIS COMOEDIAE. *Edited by* W. C. GREEN, M.A., *ate Fellow of King's College, Cambridge; Assistant Master at Rugby School.*
THE ACHARNIANS AND THE KNIGHTS. 4*s.*
THE CLOUDS. 3*s.* 6*d.*
THE WASPS. 3*s.* 6*d.*
AN EDITION OF THE ACHARNIANS and THE KNIGHTS, Revised and especially adapted for Use in Schools. 4*s.*

ISOCRATIS ORATIONES. *Edited by* JOHN EDWIN SANDYS, M.A., *Fellow and Tutor of St. John's College, Classical Lecturer at Jesus College, Cambridge.*
AD DEMONICUM ET PANEGYRICUS. 4*s.* 6*d.*

PERSII SATIRAE. *Edited by* A. PRETOR, M.A., *of Trinity College, Cambridge, Classical Lecturer of Trinity Hall.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

HOMERI ILIAS. *Edited by* S. H. REYNOLDS, M.A., *Fellow and Tutor of Brasenose College, Oxford.*
Books I. to XII. 6*s.*

TERENTI COMOEDIAE. *Edited by* T. L. PAPILLON, M.A., *Fellow of New College, Oxford, late Fellow of Merton.*
ANDRIA ET EUNUCHUS. 4*s.* 6*d.*

DEMOSTHENIS ORATIONES PRIVATAE. *Edited by the* REV. ARTHUR HOLMES, M.A., *Senior Fellow and Lecturer of Clare College, Cambridge, and Preacher at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall.*
DE CORONA, 5*s.*

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON

New Publications.

DEVOTIONAL COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPEL NARRATIVE.

By the REV. ISAAC WILLIAMS, B.D., *formerly Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford.*

New Edition. Eight Volumes. Crown 8vo. 5*s.* each.

Thoughts on the Study of the Holy Gospels.

Characteristic Differences in the Four Gospels—Our Lord's Manifestations of Himself — The Rule of Scriptural Interpretation furnished by Our Lord—Analogies of the Gospel—Mention of Angels in the Gospels—Places of Our Lord's Abode and Ministry —Our Lord's Mode of Dealing with His Apostles—Conclusion.

A Harmony of the Four Evangelists.

Our Lord's Nativity—Our Lord's Ministry (Second Year)—Our Lord's Ministry (Third Year)—The Holy Week—Our Lord's Resurrection.

Our Lord's Nativity.

The Birth at Bethlehem—The Baptism in Jordan—The First Passover.

Our Lord's Ministry. Second Year.

The Second Passover—Christ with the Twelve—The Twelve sent Forth.

Our Lord's Ministry. Third Year.

Teaching in Galilee—Teaching at Jerusalem—Last Journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

The Holy Week.

The Approach to Jerusalem—The Teaching in the Temple—The Discourse on the Mount of Olives—The Last Supper.

Our Lord's Passion.

The Hour of Darkness—The Agony—The Apprehension—The Condemnation—The Day of Sorrows—The Hall of Judgment—The Crucifixion—The Sepulture.

Our Lord's Resurrection.

The Day of Days—The Grave Visited—Christ Appearing—The Going to Emmaus—The Forty Days—The Apostles Assembled—The Lake in Galilee—The Mountain in Galilee—The Return from Galilee.

AND AT OXFORD, AND CAMBRIDGE

Rivington's Devotional Series.

Elegantly printed with red borders. 16mo. 2s. 6d.

THOMAS À KEMPIS, OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVOUT LIFE. *From the French of S. Francis of Sales, Bishop and Prince of Geneva.*

A SHORT AND PLAIN INSTRUCTION FOR THE BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER; *to which is annexed, the Office of the Holy Communion, with proper Helps and Directions. By* THOMAS WILSON, D.D., *late Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man.*

Complete Edition, in large type.

THE RULE AND EXERCISES OF HOLY LIVING. *By* JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D., *Bishop of Down and Connor, and Dromore.*

THE RULE AND EXERCISES OF HOLY DYING. *By* JEREMY TAYLOR, D.D., *Bishop of Down and Connor, and Dromore.*

The "HOLY LIVING" and the "HOLY DYING" may be had bound together in One Vol., 5s.

A PRACTICAL TRATISE CONCERNING EVIL THOUGHTS. *By* WILLIAM CHILCOT, M.A.

THE ENGLISH POEMS OF GEORGE HERBERT. *Together with his Collection of Proverbs, entitled "Jacula Prudentum."*

Cheap Editions, without the red borders.

THOMAS À KEMPIS, OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST. Limp cloth, 1s.; or in cover, 6d.

BISHOP WILSON'S HOLY COMMUNION. Large type. Limp cloth, 1s.; or in cover, 6d.

JEREMY TAYLOR'S HOLY LIVING.
JEREMY TAYLOR'S HOLY DYING.
Limp cloth, 1s. each.

HOLY LIVING and HOLY DYING, in One Volume, 2s. 6d.

WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL, LONDON
HIGH STREET, OXFORD; and TRINITY STREET, CAMBRIDGE

Lightning Source UK Ltd.
Milton Keynes UK
UKOW06n1327060916

282351UK00001B/99/P

This work has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, and is part of the knowledge base of civilization as we know it. This work was reproduced from the original artifact, and remains as true to the original work as possible. Therefore, you will see the original copyright references, library stamps (as most of these works have been housed in our most important libraries around the world), and other notations in the work.

This work is in the public domain in the United States of America, and possibly other nations. Within the United States, you may freely copy and distribute this work, as no entity (individual or corporate) has a copyright on the body of the work.

As a reproduction of a historical artifact, this work may contain missing or blurred pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. Scholars believe, and we concur, that this work is important enough to be preserved, reproduced, and made generally available to the public. We appreciate your support of the preservation process, and thank you for being an important part of keeping this knowledge alive and relevant.